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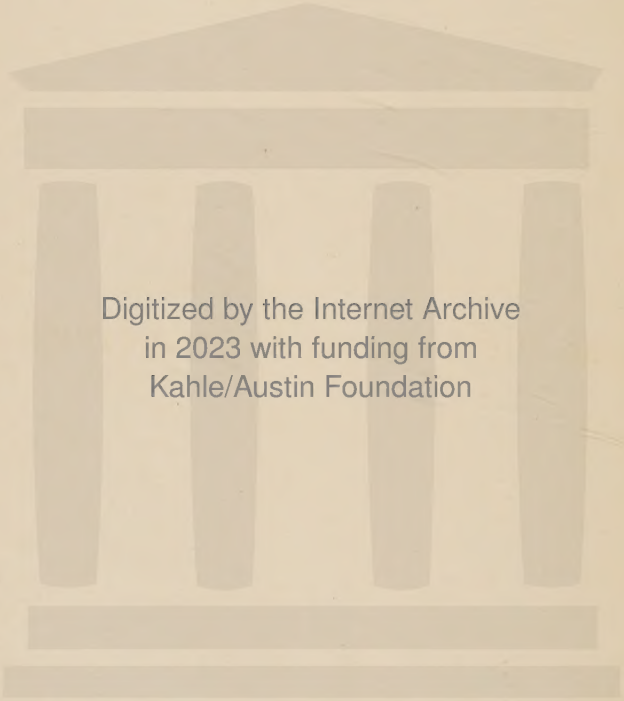
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CHRIST THE LIGHT OF ALL SCRIPTURE

BY THE LATE

W. C. MAGEE D.D.

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, AUTHOR OF "THE GOSPEL AND THE AGE"

EDITED BY

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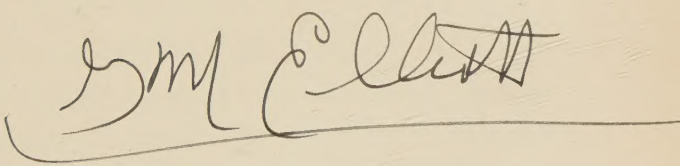
Barrister-at-Law



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PREFACE.

In the present volume I have adhered to the plan adopted by the Archbishop himself in "The Gospel and the Age," and, with the exception of "Christ the Light of all Scripture," have placed the sermons chronologically. I have done this not merely for the sake of uniformity or of reference, but for this further reason also, that they include some of the earliest as well as some of the latest sermons, and that he himself considered that the former did not fully represent his maturer thoughts and modes of expression. This very fact, however, seems to me to give them an interest of their own for those who would see the preacher in the sermon, and might wish, therefore, to trace this evolution of thought or maturity of expression.

I have also included the charge delivered at the primary visitation in the diocese of Peterborough, because in many respects it differs from an ordinary visitation address. In most cases a bishop's charge deals, mainly at any rate, with matters of purely

local or diocesan interest, and as such appeals to few readers outside the diocese in which it was delivered, but a discourse like the present one, given at the commencement of an episcopate, partakes much more of the nature of a confession of faith, in which the questions and controversies of the day are treated in no narrow or diocesan spirit. It is essentially theological, and (especially in the case of the Athanasian Creed) deals with questions which then were and may soon again become burning ones in the Church. Moreover, it is eminently characteristic — at once epigrammatic, dialectical, argumentative: and the very fact that the Athanasian Creed is dealt with in a primary charge illustrates that courage of his opinions which distinguished the Archbishop more perhaps than any other quality, for a bishop might well have been excused had he avoided a subject at the very outset of his work which was sure to provoke comment and hostility, but of which he himself said, "One thing would be worse than any amount of error in dealing with it, and that would be the cautious cowardice which refused to deal with it at all."

C. S. M.

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CHRIST THE LIGHT OF ALL SCRIPTURE.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF ALL SCRIPTURE.

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, JUNE 24, 1860.*

"The Lamb is the light thereof."—REV. xxi. 23.

WE cannot contemplate these concluding scenes of the Book of Revelation without being struck by their remarkable similarity to the opening scenes in the Book of Genesis.

The Heaven of St. John's last vision is pictured for us by imagery mainly borrowed from the description of the Garden of Eden. The river of pure water, the tree of life, the gold and precious stones of the first Paradise, all reappear in the second. The "blessed" ones who "have kept God's commandments" are described as having regained the right to eat of that fruit of immortality which man lost by breaking God's first command. They enter in through gates which, no longer barred by the sword of the cherubim, stand always open. The "sorrow and the crying," "the pain and the death," that had their beginning in the hour when God drove out the first sinner from His presence are described as passing away in the hour when God welcomes back to His presence the nations of the saved, and wipes away from their eyes the tears His first sentence had made to flow. The promise of their eternal blessedness is given in words that recall the first infliction of temporal suffering—"There shall be no more

* An Act Sermon preached for the Degree of D.D.

curse." It seems as we read it as if we were resuming some long-interrupted story; as if all that lay between these two scenes of joy and peace were but one long parenthesis at last happily terminated: the record of our race ends where it began, in a Paradise of God.

And yet amid all this striking similarity there is one striking point of contrast. There is one figure seen in the second Paradise which has no place in the first. In the midst of the throne of God, the glory and the light of all the place, is seen "a Lamb as it had been slain!" And that form recalls for ever in Heaven all the story of our race that lies between the Paradise it lost and the Paradise it shall have regained. The fall, and all the sin and shame and sorrow that followed from the fall; the deliverance, and all the agony by which that deliverance was achieved; the long, long strife of ages between light and darkness, life and death; the great final victory of the Lord of Life over the Kingdom of Death and Hell; all stand recorded in the vision of that Lamb slain for us from the foundation of the world, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last of all our history.

Read by that light of the Lamb, and by that alone, the whole of that history will yet be seen to have been but the slow and gradual accomplishment of one great design of God:—the progress of our race from its standing in the first Adam "a little lower than the angels," to its standing in the second Adam, "crowned with glory and honour." Meanwhile we know that it is so, although we see it not. We know that all our history does lie between a Genesis and a Revelation; between the love that created and the love that restores. And meanwhile we know that all the light we now enjoy, all revelation of God or of ourselves that has been given us, all of faith and hope and love that light our path on earth are but so many

rays from the light of the Lamb. The glory that in Heaven shall keep eternal memory of earth is keeping now on earth the glorious hope of Heaven. This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world!

And it is only so far as we understand and act on this great truth that all revelation is of and through Christ, all light, light from Him, that revelation will be a light to us. "No man hath seen" or can see "God at any time;" it is the "only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" who must reveal Him to us. Attempt to study any manifestation of God, and most of all the manifestation of God in His Word, without reference to Christ —separate, exclude Christ from His Word, and that Word will become to you darkness. For that Word is not light in itself, any more than it is life in itself. It is but the medium through which light and life reach us from the Sun of Righteousness. "In His light," as the Bible tells us, alone "can we see light."

Our Lord's own teaching on this point is very clear and decisive. "Ye search the Scriptures" He says to the unbelieving Jews of His day, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Our Lord here tells us that all Scripture is a testimony to Him; that the *idea* of the written Word is the Word incarnate. But the Jews, it seems, had quite lost sight of this; they had come to regard their Scriptures as having in themselves that eternal life which was only in the Christ to whom they testified; they searched them for life, but they searched them not for Christ the giver of life. And because they did this, because they had thus almost lost the idea of the Christ out of all their Scriptures, save in some few passages which seemed more expressly to foretell Him, Scripture had ceased to be light, had be-

come darkness to them. Their ceremonial law had become only a burdensome and unmeaning ritual, their moral law a death-giving letter, their prophecies only carnal and vainglorious dreams of Jewish greatness. And so it was that when He came, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did testify, they knew Him not. In the light in which they beheld Him they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

And we, brethren, if like the Jew we should fail to see Christ in all His Word; if we should come to look upon any part of that Word as having no reference to Him; as having, as the Jews thought it had, only a local and a Jewish use; as being, in short, only a *Jewish* and not also a *Christian* Word, we too, like the Jews, will most assuredly misuse and misapply it, or still more probably reject it altogether. For this latter is the danger to which the Christian Church is more especially exposed, exactly the opposite one to that to which the Jew was liable, though arising from the same cause. The Jew, who failed to see Christ in his Scriptures, trained as he was in superstitious reverence for the Word, rejected the Jesus to whom that Word did not seem to him to testify. But the Christian, trained to believe in and worship Jesus of Nazareth, would in like case be in danger, not of rejecting Him, but of despising and rejecting those portions of Scripture which seemed to have no connection with Him or His religion. The Jewish Scriptures, if divested of their reference to Christ, must have for the Christian student as little beauty that he should desire them, as Jesus of Nazareth had in the eyes of the Jewish student: the very conception of them which gave them all their charm for the Jew, that they were Jewish and for Jews alone, tending to divest them of all interest for the Gentile Christian.

It is to be feared that this is the case. It has, I fear, largely come to pass, far more largely than men like to acknowledge even to themselves, that a great portion of Scripture has to many Christians become obsolete; that it is regarded as designed only for Jews, and as having little, if any, practical use or interest for Christians. That is, in other words, that a large portion of the Bible is to many Christians no Bible at all. For whatever name we may give this book, whatever term of respect or reverence we may bestow upon it, unless it is to us the living Word which rules and moulds our daily life, it is not our Bible, not our book of books; it is not for us the Sword of the Spirit with which we wage daily war upon all things evil around us and within us; it is at best but a collection of old armour which might have been for men of other times the whole armour of God, but in which we never now dream of arraying ourselves.

But surely this is a most dangerous state in which to be; dangerous not merely to the truth and integrity of our own minds, if we are ever paying an insincere homage to Scripture, using words of reverence respecting it, which as regards large portions of it are not true words for us, but most dangerous to our belief in those parts of Scripture which still make our Bible. For, brethren, however we may attempt to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the living and the dead Word, Scripture refuses to accommodate itself to any such treatment. The Christ whom we worship received, owned, lived by the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, tells us by the mouth of His Apostle that it is all inspired, all profitable, all written for our learning. The credit of the New Testament is thus as it were pledged for that of the Old, and whatever weakens our respect for the one must eventually weaken it for the other.

Now, if we would escape this danger, and I believe it to be a real and a pressing one for many minds, I am persuaded that we can only do so by restoring to all Scripture its true central idea, that which alone will make it to us one whole, harmonious and living Word—the idea of the Christ. We must learn to search the Scriptures, believing that they all testify of Jesus, and then we shall find in all of them a revelation of eternal life.

And it is thus and thus alone that we claim to have the question decided, whether this book is or is not a Divine utterance to men. Tried by any other test, we do not expect, we do not wish that men should acknowledge it to be Divine. For the Word of God, like any other word, must have its own true and proper idea, its own aim and purpose, which accounts for its form and structure, and without reference to which no one is competent to criticise, because no one can understand it. And the more perfectly it is framed to set forth this leading idea and this only, the more utterly unmeaning will it appear if viewed apart from it. Now we contend that this central idea of all Scripture is the manifestation of God in Christ, and the plan and history of the redemption achieved by that manifestation. The Lamb is the light, and the only light of all His Word; lose sight of or reject Him, and we do not wonder, nay we fully expect, that His Word will be darkness to you. See Him in it, and so far as you do will that Word, lit up for you by light from Heaven, be a light to all your paths.

But, on the other hand, if this idea of the Christ does account for the structure of all Scripture, then the fact that it does so affords the strongest proof both of the truth of that idea and of the Divinity of the Word that reveals it. For that these many writings, the products of so many independent minds, scattered over such wide distances of

time and space, should all in some mysterious way, evidently without any common design on the part of their authors, be found to be constructed on one great plan, all making parts of a perfect whole, all setting forth one great idea, and that idea one so utterly improbable and supernatural and yet so glorious and so blessed, so exactly what man needs and yet so utterly beyond all that man could conceive, as the idea of redemption by Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man—that all this should be, and yet be an accident, would be a far greater miracle than any which the Word records.

The believer in the Scriptures and in the Christ whom they reveal may therefore fairly challenge those who reject either or both to reply to this argument.

If the idea of the Christ of the Gospels and of the Creed be the true one—if from the foundation of the world it was the purpose of God that there should one day appear in it a Son of God and Son of Man, incarnate, suffering, dying, atoning, rising from the dead, ascending into Heaven, and so winning for His people a Kingdom of eternal glory—then this fact accounts for, necessitates the existence of just such a book as our Bible, and on this supposition that book becomes an intelligible, consistent, and harmonious whole. But if ours be not the true idea of the Christ—if incarnation and atonement and redemption and sanctification be only the names and notions of a scholastic theology or the myths of some obsolete religion —if Jesus of Nazareth were only a moral philosopher, and Christianity only His system of morals—then, not only does this Bible become for the most part a chaos of confusion and contradiction, a collection of unconnected fragments of doubtful history and pretended prophecy and impracticable precept, but it is itself, taken altogether, the most extraordinary and utterly unaccountable fact,

the most inscrutable phenomenon that has ever appeared in this world. Its existence is the greatest and strangest of all mysteries, a mystery which the unbeliever is bound to account for, and which on any other theory, save that which we hold and which he rejects, he will attempt to account for in vain.

Let me endeavour, then, briefly to sketch for you the outline of this argument as applied to each of the three great divisions of Scripture—its Prophecy, its History, its Law.

And in the first place, let us examine how far the Christian conception of Christ accounts for the structure of Scripture prophecy.

We turn to what we believe to be the first prophecy of Christ, the first proclamation of the Gospel to man, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

Now, what must have been the idea presented to the minds of those who first heard this prophecy ? Clearly it must have been that of a suffering saviour—a champion of the human race—sprung from the woman, who should crush their enemy the serpent, but himself suffer in the act of crushing him. And it is, I think, further clear that the deliverance they expected him to achieve for them must have been something more than the mere literal and physical triumph of a man over a serpent. They never could have held this prophecy fulfilled the first time that a man stamped out a serpent's life. The serpent had been to them the cause of all the evils they suffered from, and the destruction of the serpent could

* Gen. iii. 15.

mean for them nothing less than the undoing of all the hurt that the serpent had done them.

Deliverance, then, from all evil, by means of a *Son of Man*, who yet should suffer in delivering them—this was the idea of the first prophecy, and the substance of the first hope. Already, then, we see faintly sketched the outline which all subsequent prophecy only filled up more clearly. Already the Spirit of God is testifying to holy men of the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

But along with this promise of a deliverer, and necessarily springing out of it, another idea must have arisen in the minds of those who heard it—the idea of a judge and an avenger. It could not have been long before the conviction dawned on those who believed that there was one day to be in the world a destroyer of evil, that he must be also a destroyer of evil men. Too soon was it plain to see that if there was among men a seed of the woman, there was also a seed of the serpent, exhibiting his nature, destined to share his fate. The promise of Him who was to crush the serpent's head, implied ere long a warning prophecy of Him who should crush the serpent's brood; and thus the very idea of salvation and deliverance gave rise in a world of impenitent and hardened sinners to that of judgment and retribution. That it did so, we know from the prophecy of Enos, who though but "the seventh from Adam," foresaw and foretold a Saviour who should also be a judge who should come "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." * Thus from out the first promise given to man there arises before us the vision of the

* Jude 14, 15.

Christ of all Scripture, the Christ of the Creeds, the victim, the deliverer, the judge—Him of whom we say, that "when He took upon Him to deliver man, He did not abhor the Virgin's womb"; Him of whom we say, that "we believe that He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead."

And in this idea of the Christ that was to be we have the key-note of all the prophecy that foretold Him. We can understand, for instance, what on any other supposition would be altogether unintelligible, the strangely contradictory character of many of the prophecies which foretell Him. We know how the strains of hope and of fear, of promise and of warning, of triumph and of dismay, are strangely mingled on the lips of the messengers that proclaim His coming. As we listen to them, we seem to hear two distinct voices—one sad and mournful, heavy with "the burden of the word of the Lord," the other rejoicing and exulting, calling on the heavens to rejoice, and the earth to be glad, for the coming of Him "who is to judge the people righteously, and to govern the nations upon earth." We can understand how the great day of the Lord should be described in one and the same prophecy as "the acceptable year" and "the day of vengeance." We can understand how the Messiah, the deliverer, should be described at one time as "meek and lowly," as "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "growing up as a plant out of the dry ground," "stricken, smitten of God, afflicted," and at another time as He who comes "glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength," red from the "treading of the wine press" of the wrath of God. All this becomes intelligible and natural if there was to be a Christ such as He in whom we believe—a deliverer and yet a judge, a redeemer and yet an avenger—if there is

yet to be a final deliverance from evil, which must also be a judgment of all evil men. But if not, if there be no such fact to harmonize these otherwise discordant utterances, then are these Hebrew prophecies but pompous and unmeaning rhapsodies, tales full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

And this fact that the Prophets had ever before them the last great act of judgment and yet of deliverance, accounts for another characteristic of Jewish prophecy, which distinguishes it most markedly from all heathen prophecy. I mean its essentially moral character. The Hebrew prophet is no mere foreteller, no mere herald of a coming fate which his supernatural powers enable him to see and to announce, but not to avert. The Hebrew prophet is a *seer*. He is one who sees the affairs of men in the light in which God sees them, in the light of that great last day of separation and of judgment, which for him already casts its light and its shadow over all things. He foretells a judgment, but it is judgment upon sin; a judgment men may escape if they cease to sin. He foretells a blessing, but it is a blessing for the righteous; a blessing men may lose if they cease to be righteous. It is a fate that he foresees, but it is the fate that has linked together from all eternity sin and suffering, obedience and joy. He is God's witness as well as His prophet. Nay, it is because he is His witness, that he is also His prophet. Surely it is not without a deep significance that the name of the prophet is given to the preacher under the new dispensation, and the task of the preacher to the prophet under the old. Both are prophets, both are preachers too. When Isaiah and Jeremiah proclaim the judgments of the Lord upon rebellious Israel or the idolatrous heathen, they are preachers of righteousness and repentance. When we preach, "He that believeth

shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," we are prophets of judgment, foretelling the day of the Lord. And it is the same great, awful, glorious future, the coming of the Christ, the Saviour and the judge, which makes each prophecy a sermon, and which makes every true sermon a prophecy.

And it is this too which accounts for that other striking peculiarity of the Old Testament prophecies, that they seem often so strangely out of proportion to the occasions on which they are uttered, and to the magnitude of the events they predict. How often do we find the repulse of some neighbouring tribe, the capture or the deliverance of some petty town in Palestine or Syria described in language that only fits the destruction or deliverance of the world! It is so just because each one of these events represents, and is most closely and necessarily connected with the destruction and deliverance of the world. These judgments and these blessings, these defeats and these victories that the Prophets see approaching in the nearer present are only so many accomplishments on a lesser scale of that last great defeat of all God's enemies and that last great victory of His people. They are each of them in very truth *days of the Lord*, foreshadowings and foretastes of the last great day. And thus it is that the language of the Prophet in describing them is ever swelling out to the dimensions suited to the greatness of that which is ever present to his mind. He begins to paint in the chambers of his imagery the conquest of some heathen nation. Ere he is aware the picture assumes the dimensions—wears the hues of the last great gathering of all the tribes of the earth for judgment, the multitudes in the great "valley of decision," when the Lord's great controversy with rebellious man is to be ended for ever. He begins to depict some coming king or prince, who

shall deliver Israel from peril or captivity, and there appears upon the canvas the form of the King of Kings, "girding His sword upon His thigh," and going forth to His last great victory. Now if there is such a King of Kings, a just one and yet a Saviour—a Son of Man to whom judgment has been committed—a Lamb of God, yet from whom nations shall flee in terror—if in one word there be and is to be the Christ we worship, all this is intelligible; if not, as one of these Prophets would have described it, it is as the song "of one that playeth very sweetly on an instrument," stately, and solemn, and affecting—but no more!

But Scripture is history, as well as prophecy. Is the Lamb the light of this also? Does the idea of the Christ account for the structure of the historical parts of Scripture?

Now, in the first place, it is clear that from the moment that first prophecy to which we have referred was uttered, it must have made for itself a history; the history of those who believed it, as distinguished from the history of those who believed it not. The utterance of that word in the world marks off at once a race of men who differ from others in this, that they look for the coming of a Kingdom of God. But in that very fact we see that Kingdom already set up. The protest against the usurper, the proclamation of the rightful King is already made, the struggle between the two kingdoms is commenced, the faith that overcomes the world is at work, the powers and the virtues of the new Kingdom are already experienced. Christ is already seen in the world, giving power to as many as believe on Him to become the sons of God. The history of His Church, sacred history, has begun.

But, if God's Kingdom was thus from the very first

among men, and if there is to be any history of it, then we can see that to be a *true* history, it must be an *inspired* history. For what man untaught by the Spirit of God could unerringly select from the facts of the world's history those which properly belong to the history of the Church of God? These facts lie embedded amongst national traditions and chronicles, and, like them, patent to the eye of the student of history. But to recognise them for what they are, to select and arrange them into a history of the Kingdom of God requires a Divine guidance and enlightenment, quite as much as it would to have foreseen those events before they came to pass. To recognise the presence of Christ in the past is as much a miracle as to foresee it in the future. The inspiration of *selection* is as much inspiration as that of prophecy. And therefore we can believe that though Moses, or Joshua, or Samuel found much of their materials in the uninspired records of their nation, yet that in the selection of these, in separating the true from the false, the secular from the sacred, they were as truly inspired, and needed to be so quite as much as Isaiah or Jeremiah in their loftiest visions of the remotest future.

But further, if this Old Testament history be indeed sacred, if it be the history of God's Kingdom among men, then we can understand how in it too, as well as in prophecy, events seemingly small and trifling should be dwelt upon with a length and a seriousness apparently altogether disproportionate. For in such a history no event, no personage can be really unimportant. Each one displays the working of some mighty power or principle of the Kingdom of God in its opposition to the kingdom of Satan. Round about each scene that it describes are gathered the hostile forces of good and evil, and every crisis in that history concentrates upon itself the interests

and the destiny of the human race. And just as in the history of this world's kingdoms, it is not the extent of the battlefield, nor yet the number of the combatants, but the greatness of the issues, the importance of the principles contended for that gives its true interest to the combat; as the world will continue to gaze upon the plain of Marathon or the pass of Thermopylæ with an interest that it bestows not upon far wider fields and mightier struggles; so we can believe that the tent of Abram, the house of Potiphar, the plains of Egypt, the hills and valleys of Palestine may have for us an intense and awful interest, a vast importance,—may deserve the most minute, the most elaborate description, if each of them was the scene of some part of that great battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent which is still being waged around us and within us, and on the issue of which depends our destiny for eternity. These scenes may well deserve to be told at length if they are the great, the true decisive battles of the world.

But more! If this kingdom of God is one day to produce the perfect Son of Man—the very crown and flower of humanity—the righteous One who is to be all that man has failed to be; and if He be already working in His Kingdom—already giving sons of men the power to become sons of God—then we may expect that the history of this Kingdom will furnish many types and foreshadowings of Him in the lives of its righteous men. For in so far as any one of these approaches, however remotely, to the ideal of what he ought to have been—in so far as he is a true member of the family or the nation, a true king, or law-giver, or priest, or prophet—so far he must resemble Him who was to be all these, and all of them in perfection. And those, of course, who were pre-eminent in

any of these respects would be pre-eminently types of Him, the highest peaks reflecting still most brightly the rays of the rising sun. Thus, not by any arbitrary arrangement, not by any strained or fanciful comparison, but out of the truest and deepest of all analogies, the leading characters of this sacred history must be types of Christ. And we can understand, too, how prophecy, deriving its symbols from history, should most naturally describe Him who was to come, as the successor of the most remarkable of those who had in past times resembled, and so foreshadowed Him—how, for instance, the true lawgiver should be announced as "the prophet like unto Moses"; the true head of God's believing family, in whom all the nations of the earth should be fully and truly blessed, as "the Son of Abraham"; the true man after God's own heart, the true Shepherd-King, who should guide and guard the flock of God, as "the Son of David." All this, we maintain, is intelligible and natural and almost inevitable, if there was a perfect humanity, a root of all human righteousness underlying all the history of these righteous men, living in all their life, displaying itself in every righteous deed and word of theirs, and at last fully revealing itself in the life of Him who, because He was true man —the true ideal of humanity—is called "the Son of Man," "the truth," as well as "the way" and "the life" for men. But if there never was in the world such a Son of Man, then our typical interpretations of Scripture, our notions of typical men whose lives gave promise of a Christ to come, must indeed be rejected as so many strained and puerile conceits—mere fancies and dreams of imaginative men; but so, too, must all the hopes and aspirations—the earnest hopes and longing, fervent aspirations—of all the noblest and best, not only of Jews, but of heathen, who, ever as they struggled and strove with

the evils of their day, sustained themselves with the vision and the hope of that day of the Son of Man, which, dimly as they saw it, they rejoiced to see, and were glad and who longed and looked for a reign of righteousness, a world of righteous sons of men, who should be sons of God. The light of prophecy and of type may thus be made to fade away from out of all Scripture, but with it fades the light of hope from all the life of man; not the vision of the Jewish prophet, nor the anticipation of the Jewish nation only, but "the desire of all nations," becomes a delusion and a dream.

But if all righteous men in God's Kingdom of old, so far as they were righteous, were truly types of the Son of Man yet to be revealed, their lives must have been ever teaching the Jew another lesson. They must have been ever proving to him that, however high might be the standing to which human nature could attain in some men, yet that even in these it failed and came short of the glory which it aimed at. From time to time patriarch and prophet, lawgiver and king give sad proof by some grievous sin, some shameful infirmity, that human nature cannot, alone and unaided, rise above itself; that if ever there is to be seen in the world a perfect human righteousness, it must be from above. And so from time to time in the history of their kingdom, there is revealed to them a hope and a promise of this Divine righteousness. Not only do they see men who seek after God, but a God who seeks after man; now revealing Himself to him in dreams or visions as the Almighty God, who would be his Lord and his Father; now coming to his aid in time of sorest need or peril; now strengthening him with superhuman courage and might; now inspiring him with superhuman wisdom; now giving him miraculous mastery over the powers and elements of nature, or not less mira-

culous mastery over the stormy elements and passions of his own nature. And thus as we peruse this history of God's Kingdom among men, we see throughout it all, side by side with the idea of a humanity ever tending, struggling upwards towards God, the idea of Deity ever condescending to, ever allying itself with man. Thus already does the great mystery of godliness—the union of the two natures—God manifest in the flesh, take almost visible shape and form before us, and thus the lines of history, like the lines of prophecy, are seen all to lead up to and converge in the God-man, the incarnate Christ!

But while the whole form and structure of Scripture prophecy and of Scripture history is thus seen to point to Christ, still more emphatically, still more certainly may it be said of all its law, that the Lamb, and the Lamb alone is the light thereof.

And here our argument may be very briefly stated, for here more especially do the conditions of that argument force themselves upon our notice with a clearness and a distinctness from which there is no escape. Whatever may be said or thought of other portions of Holy Writ, we do not hesitate to affirm of the law, that between the belief that God designed and gave it to be a picture of the work of Christ and a training to prepare those who obeyed it to receive Him—and the absolute and unqualified denial that God ever gave it to man at all, there is no standing ground possible. Either the ritual of the Jews was a Divine prophecy of the atonement, or it is not Divine at all.

For, view this Jewish ritual apart from any thought of a future atonement to be represented in it—look on it only as a system of worship appointed for men by God, and is it conceivable that the God we worship could have ever

given it? We do not hesitate to say that, thus viewed, the ceremonial law of the Jews, with its blood-stained altars, its ruthless waste of innocent life, its burdensome ritual of minute and useless ceremonies, its vexatious and wanton restrictions, its severe and awful penalties for the slightest infraction of its many rules, is one of the most unmeaning, the most repulsive, the most childish of all human superstitions. It might have been the invention of Moses, or his modification of the Egyptian worship; it might have been imposed upon a credulous and barbarous people by some crafty priest, or tyrannical ruler; but a revelation from the God and Father of men, to his favoured people, of the way in which He would have men worship Him, it never, never could have been.

But view it as a revelation in type and symbol of the atonement hereafter to be effected by the sacrifice of Christ; see in its altars, stained with the blood of innocent victims, so many pictures of that shedding of blood which should procure remission for the sins of the whole world; in its awful, and veiled, and inaccessible holy of holies, a symbolic teaching of the truth that only through the rent veil of the true tabernacle could free access be made for man to God; in its priesthood, the type of the eternal pleading of the High Priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities; in all its ceremonial washings and cleansings, the proclamation of the truth that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; in all its minute restrictions, the prophecy of that peculiar holiness that must ever separate the seed of the woman from the seed of the serpent—view it thus, and it becomes a picture so minutely accurate, a prophecy so extensively and yet so entirely true of all those good things to come, "a pattern of Heavenly things" so exquisitely perfect, that it cannot have been given by any save by Him who from everlast-

ing had designed alike the true and Heavenly tabernacle, and this, its earthly and prophetic shadow.

But if it be true of the ceremonial law, still more certainly is it true of the moral law—of that code of righteousness which those who reject the idea of atoning sacrifice consent to accept as the only valuable portion of the Mosaic system—that if there be no atonement, no self-sacrificing and redeeming Christ, this law can never have been a Divine gift to man. The Ten Commandments, we affirm—as we have affirmed of the whole Jewish ritual—are only intelligible, only endurable, when seen by the light of the Lamb. For what means this law, with its awful, because perfect, holiness, its searching, all-embracing requirements, which it was impossible perfectly to obey, and yet for the transgression of which no atonement was provided—this law, which forced upon the conscience of the Jew the conviction that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin—which forces on us now the conviction that there is no perfect obedience possible for the natural man—what means it, I say, as a message from God to man, if there is to be no Divine power given us to obey, no Divine forgiveness for our disobedience? What is it but a most awful and cruel mockery of man by his Maker and Judge, to give a law which he cannot obey, and which he is neither to be helped to obey, nor pardoned for disobeying? Moral teaching! is this the benefit, and all the benefit Christ has conferred upon us—a purer and a higher morality than that of Moses? Oh! if this be all—if Christ has only come to tell men of a holiness purer than that which they already knew to be far beyond their reach, and a righteousness which they could never attain to, better, far better, that He had never come at all! Better, surely, that men had continued to "sit in darkness" for ever than that the light of the Lamb should

have shone upon them only to reveal to them the walls of a prison house from which they could not escape until they paid the uttermost farthing! But, on the other hand, if Christ was to come to reveal not only righteousness, but the power to be righteous—not only sin, but salvation from sin—then we can understand how this stern, holy law, side by side with the law of sacrifice for sin, both together pointed forward—the one by the perfection of its requirements, the other by the perfection of its atonements—to Him in whom alone men should find a perfect righteousness and a perfect atonement, Him of whom it was written in the volume of the book, "I come to do Thy will, O God!"

And now, brethren, that I have concluded, however imperfectly, the task which I proposed to myself, and to which your own memories will doubtless have suggested many arguments which I have omitted, I would ask whether, as you look back on all that Old Testament Scripture, upon its prophecy, its history, its law, it does not in each and all of them bear testimony to Jesus? whether it has not all the air of one great elaborate prophecy of Christ? I would ask you whether, if we could suppose that prophecy not to have been fulfilled in such a Christ as our Gospels picture, that Word does not become perplexing, unmeaning, disappointing, full of shadows with no corresponding realities, symbols with no significance, types with no antetypes, hopes long deferred and never fulfilled, desires never satisfied, prayers never answered! Restore to the Word the Christ of the Gospel, and we ask you is not all light again, and do not symbol and type, and desire and hope, and prayer and prophecy all find their meaning and their accomplishment in Him?

And thus does all the Old Testament Scripture become

for us again a living Word, as it becomes the mirror in which we see reflected the form of the living Christ. The Jewish ritual, no longer obsolete, sets forth for us the ever efficacious atonement, the never ceasing intercession of Christ, our great High Priest. The law of the ten tables held in the hand of Christ, is changed by His transforming power from a law into a prophecy, no longer telling us only what we *must* be, but foretelling to us what we *shall* be when we shall be made like Him at His appearing. The history of the people of God in olden time illustrates for us the nature of that kingdom of righteousness of which they were subjects then as we are now; of which Christ is King now as He was then. The lives of all the old world saints, and patriarchs, and prophets, and kings connect themselves with all our daily life now; their faith, and hope, and joy, and love, is ours, who like them declare that we "look for a city that hath foundations," and confess ourselves "to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth." We pray their prayers, and sing their songs of praise, and pour out our soul's joys and sorrows in the words that served to utter theirs; for their God is our God, and their Saviour our Saviour; as they lived so do we live, and in the hope in which they died would we fain die too. Every prophecy that was fulfilled in the most distant past has still a direct and powerful influence upon our present life and conversation. The fate of Tyre and Babylon, of Moab and Ammon, has for us a deep and enduring interest, though Moab and Ammon and Tyre and Babylon have long since passed away; for as God dealt with them and with their kings, even so will He deal at last with all the kingdom of evil, and with its rebellious king. The law that foretold their doom foretells the doom of all that opposes itself to Him. Every predicted chastening and deliverance of Judah or of Israel,

every warning ever spoken, every mercy ever granted them concerns us now; for the same revelation which foretold them tells us that all "judgment must begin at the house of God," and yet that, even when He chastens with his sorest judgments, "He remembers mercy," and that "His loving-kindness He will not utterly take away." Nay, the light of the Old Testament is reflected even on the New; for the New Testament has its prophecies yet unfulfilled, its mystic and symbolic foreshadowings yet uninterpreted. But though the sentences which proclaim the last great judgments of God upon a guilty and sacrilegious world, and the last great deliverance of his faithful people, be strange and perplexing and awful in their very indistinctness—though we vainly seek an interpreter who shall read for us all their meaning—yet have we learned at least to know whose is the hand that writes them; we know that the light which has lighted up the older revelations of His purposes concerning us, and which will one day reveal all the meaning of these last words of warning and of doom, is still the light of the Lamb.

Time does not permit that I should carry on into the New Testament the argument which I have thus applied to the Old. Nor is there any need that I should prove to you that it is a Word which testifies to Christ, or show you how, as the promise of Christ's first coming determines all the character of the Old Testament, so the promise of His second coming determines all the character of the New; how from it there springs, as in the Old Testament, a history, a law, a ritual, and a prophecy—a history commencing in the acts of the Apostles of that Church which, waiting for her Lord from Heaven, accomplishes His mission here on earth; a law in the epistles, which, while they show us "what manner of persons we ought to be in all godly

conversation," reveal to us a righteousness not yet attainable, and which, therefore, point onwards, like the older law, to the time when we shall be conformed to His image; a ritual which, though it no longer foreshadows a sacrifice, yet presents, in its highest and most solemn rite, a memorial of that sacrifice, and foreshadows the feast upon that sacrifice, when all the redeemed ones shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb; a prophecy, which, in all its mingled gloom and glory, its awful and dazzling visions, its mystic and as yet inscrutable symbols, reveals, in full distinctness, at least one form,—the form of the Son of Man; gives one promise full of a joy we can imagine, and a glory we can at least in part conceive—a Heaven of which the Lamb is all the light!

But I would, in conclusion, remind you of one characteristic of the New Testament revelation of Christ—one which appears but faintly in the Old, but is the distinguishing glory of the New; it is that it reveals a Christ who is to dwell not only among, but *in* His people.

Christ *for* us is the idea of the Old Testament; Christ *in* us is the idea of the New. "I in them and they in Me," was His last prayer. "We will come and take up Our abode" is His most precious promise. "Christ in us" is our most assured hope of glory. Yes, brethren, here is for each of us the truest and the most blessed revelation of Christ—the Christ *within* us. The surest proof to us that Christ has lived is that in us all His life should be repeated; that we should be "baptized into His baptism"; "drink of His cup"; "know the fellowship of His sufferings, and the power of His resurrection"; rise in Him "to newness of life," bearing with Him still the cross, that we may at last wear with Him the crown! This is real, vital Christianity. It is not a creed; it is not a system; it is not a law; it is a life—the life of Christ in

the soul of man; the life which He has come that we "might have, and have it more abundantly."

If we have not this, it will avail us little, or rather it will avail only to our heavier condemnation, that we should be able to see Christ in His Word, that we should be able to defend its inspiration, and prove its authenticity, and explain its mysteries. In vain shall we able to say that we have eaten and drunk in His presence, and that He has taught in our streets, if we have never opened to Him the door of our heart, and made Him there our loved and honoured guest. But if we have, then is this Word indeed a living Word for us. It is for us the voice of the living Christ, ever guiding, quickening, strengthening, sanctifying our souls; a Word which amidst all its revelations of Him contains none more precious than this—"Christ who is our life;" a Word which amidst all its promises contains none more glorious than the faithful saying—"If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him;" a Word which the more we study it as the Word of our living, risen Saviour, will be more and more within us a day-star arising in our hearts, shedding abroad there the blessed light of peaceful, holy love, that light of the Lamb which is the light, and all the light of Heaven!

MYSTERY AND FAITH.

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PREACHED AT BATH, 1854.

"How can these things be?"—JOHN iii. 9.

THIS chapter records the instruction which Christ gave to a convert to Christianity. Nicodemus, who is the speaker here, is unconsciously a Christian; he believes that Jesus Christ is "a teacher come from God"; he acknowledges His divine mission as proved by His miracles; he has come to Him, therefore, to receive instruction, prepared to believe whatever He shall tell him. In this Nicodemus resembles all converts to a new faith; he is satisfied with its evidences, willing to believe all its doctrines, but not yet fully instructed in them; he is a believer, but still a learner. We have then in this scene the Christian learner and the Divine teacher. We are about to hear the Christian religion taught by Christ himself. Our Lord commences His teaching by propounding to Nicodemus a mystery, one of the greatest and deepest mysteries of the Christian religion, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus does not understand these words; he asks, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Our Lord answers this question; He explains that He did not mean the natural, but the spiritual, birth. "Except a man be born *of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter

into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again.'" Hereupon Nicodemus asks the question in our text, "How can these things be?" But our Lord does not answer this question—He rather rebukes him for having asked it.

We see, then, that there is a marked difference in our Lord's manner of replying to the two questions put to Him by Nicodemus. To the first He gives an explanation, removing the difficulty that was in the mind of the enquirer. To the second He gives no explanation, and leaves the difficulty, whatever it was, unexplained. And this difference is the more remarkable because the two questions are very similar; there seems, at first sight, very little difference between the two sentences:—"How can a man be born when he is old?" and "How can these things be?" And yet, slight as this difference seems, it is immense; it is all the difference between belief and unbelief, between lawful enquiry and unlawful curiosity. To understand why our Lord answered the first of these questions and did not answer the second is to understand the principle on which all revelation is given; it is to know how God teaches, and how we are to listen. We entreat your earnest attention while we endeavour to show you what it so deeply concerns us all to understand.

The first of these questions was an enquiry into the meaning of the words used by our Lord. To the mind of Nicodemus the words "man born again" conveyed only one idea, and that an utterly absurd and impossible one; a man could not possibly be born again in the sense in which Nicodemus understood the words; he could not enter again into his mother's womb and be born. The terms,

then, of our Lord's proposition were unintelligible to his hearer; they conveyed either no meaning, or an absurd one. Nicodemus, therefore, asks for an explanation, and he was perfectly right in so doing, for no man can believe that which he knows to be impossible and absurd, and no man can believe a proposition unless he understand the terms in which it is stated. Whatever may be the subject of a proposition, unless the words which convey it be clear and intelligible, it cannot be believed, simply because it does not convey any idea to the mind at all. That two and two make four is a simple proposition which every one here believes as we speak it; but if, instead of saying these words, we were to repeat them in some unknown tongue, no one here could believe them, for no one could attach any meaning at all to them until they were translated, that is, until the terms used were made intelligible. These words of our Lord were as an unknown language to Nicodemus, and therefore he asks for an explanation, and our Lord gives this explanation. He tells him that He did not mean by "man" merely the body of man, nor by being "born again" merely the natural birth. He does not ask Nicodemus to believe a manifest absurdity; He means by "man," the soul of man; and by being "born again," the renewal of the soul. Now the meaning of the words is clear, Nicodemus fully understands what is the proposition he is asked to believe, viz., that man's spirit must be born again of the Spirit of God. There is no absurdity here; nothing that contradicts his experience, for he had never seen a spirit born or die; there is nothing, therefore, to prevent his receiving as true what our Lord had said. But though there is no room for misunderstanding, there is room for curiosity and unbelief. Our Lord has said nothing of the manner in which the Spirit effects this change, and, accordingly, Nicodemus

asks his second question, "How can these things be?" Observe, he does not say, as in the former question, "How can a man be born again?"—this difficulty has been removed; but How can these things, these spiritual things be? This is a very different question; this is not asking what is the meaning of the words used by our Lord, but what is the nature of the things which those words describe.

Now to this enquiry our Lord gives no answer, for, in the first place, Nicodemus ought not to have asked it. He had acknowledged Christ as his teacher; he had asked and received an explanation of the terms of the proposition which he was required by Him to believe. When he asks further, "How can these things be?" it can only be because he would not believe what Christ tells him is the fact, until He has told him how it is (that is, until it becomes self-evident); or else because he was curious to understand the manner of it. This question of his implied, therefore, either unbelief or curiosity. Our Lord never gratifies either. What the Spirit of God effects in man is a truth to be believed; this truth is clearly revealed. How the Spirit effects it is a fact not required to be believed, and therefore it is not stated.

From this interview between Christ and Nicodemus, then, we learn two things respecting the mysteries of our religion; we learn, first, what a mystery is; secondly, how we ought to receive it.

First, a mystery is not an unintelligible proposition. It is not a sentence, no word of which we can understand; for such a sentence could convey to our minds no idea whatever—we could neither believe it nor disbelieve it—nor, in fact, think about it at all. A mystery is a proposition, *the terms* of which are definite and intelligible, but *the subject* of which is unintelligible; and, therefore,

when we say that we believe a mystery, we mean that we believe a certain proposition to be true, though we cannot understand why or how it is true. In fact, every proposition which is neither self-evident nor demonstrable, but which rests upon authority alone, is to the hearer of it a mystery. It is in this sense that the word is always used in Scripture. For instance, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."* Here the terms of St. Paul's propositions are perfectly intelligible. Every one understands what is the meaning of "sleeping" and "being changed"; but the subject of the proposition is obscure. No one understands the nature of the change which is foretold. The same Apostle, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, calls the Gospel a mystery.† He does not mean that the terms of the Gospel are unintelligible; on the contrary, he asks their prayers that he may be able to "make it known," but he means that the subject of the Gospel, namely, the atonement effected by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is unintelligible. The fact to be believed is clearly revealed, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; but "how these things can be" is neither revealed, nor if it were, could we understand it. So, in the same Epistle, St. Paul terms the calling of the Gentiles, and their being made partakers of the promise in Christ, a mystery,‡ not because the Ephesians could not understand the *fact* that they had been so called, but because they could not understand *the reason* for that fact, which was the hidden counsel of God. In all these "mysteries" we see the

* 1 Cor. xv. 51. † Eph. vi. 19. ‡ Eph. iii. 3—6.

things to be believed clearly stated—the how and the why concealed.

Secondly, the two questions which Nicodemus asked mark for us exactly the limits of enquiry concerning mysteries. His first question is an inquiry into the meaning of the terms used, and this it is clearly our duty to make, in order that we may believe what is said; but the second is an inquiry as to the manner in which the thing revealed exists. To ask this question is either a sin or a folly; a sin if we ask it in order to have further proof than the fact that God has said it; a folly, if we seek to understand that which is above our comprehension, and with which we are in no way concerned. Briefly, then, mysteries are propositions, announcing, in plain and intelligible terms, unintelligible things; and our duty respecting them is always to ask the first of Nicodemus's two questions, never to ask the second; always to see that we understand the terms correctly, never to seek to understand the things themselves.

Now, simple as these principles seem when thus stated, it is from neglecting them that nearly all the errors and heresies respecting the mysteries of religion have arisen. For instance, the unbeliever objects to religion that it contains mysteries. "A revelation," he maintains, "should be perfectly plain and clear, or it is no revelation. How can any man believe what he does not understand? Where mystery begins religion ends." Now the answer to this objection—upon the principles we have laid down—is very simple. We ask the objector, "What do you mean when you say that a revelation should be clear? Do you mean that *the words* contained in it should be clear and plain? If so, we agree with you; we admit that if it were not in this sense clear, no man could be called upon to believe it, for no man can believe words

the meaning of which he is ignorant of. But in this sense the revelation is clear and plain, and the words it uses are intelligible; therefore, if you mean by mystery *an unintelligible sentence*, there are no mysteries in Scripture. But if by a mystery you mean *a sentence telling us in plain language something, the nature of which we cannot understand*, and if in this sense you say no man can be called upon to believe what he does not understand, then we say that he may be so called on, for that it is perfectly possible for a man to believe that a certain thing is, and yet not know how or why it is so; and so far from this being peculiar to religion, it is the law of all knowledge. So far from there being mysteries, in this sense, only in the Bible, there are mysteries in science, and in nature, and in art. You, who say you will not believe a mystery, believe thousands of them. What fact is there in nature which you can explain the reason of? Not one. Why does an apple fall to the ground? By the law of gravitation. And what is the law of gravitation? A mystery! Why does the magnet attract iron, or the needle point northward? By the law of magnetic attraction. But what is magnetic attraction? A mystery! You know that these things are, but you cannot tell us "how they can be." You believe that you live; and what is life? A mystery! You know you think; and what is thought? A mystery! You believe that mind and body exist together united; but how are they united? A mystery! Death separates them; how? A mystery! Everything around you and within you, the insect at your feet, the flower in your path, the air you breathe, are all mysteries to you; you can dissect, you can decompose their component parts; you can spell out the terms of these propositions which nature presents to your belief; you can say what they are, but you have never yet reached, in one

single instance, the how and the why that underlies all visible things. And yet you, a man, placed in a world of mysteries, you who see and hear mysteries, you who are a mystery to yourself, existing between the two dark mysteries of life and death, you, forsooth, tell us you will have no mysteries—you will believe nothing but what you understand.

"Where mystery begins religion ends." And what then will be your religion? Will you even admit the first truth of religion—that there is a God? And if you do, can you explain these words? Why, so far from religion ending where mystery begins, religion begins with the greatest of all mysteries—God is. How can it be otherwise? There is but one Being for whom there are no mysteries, for there is but one Being who knows all things. What is mystery but the horizon that bounds the knowledge of a finite being, the shadow of ignorance that falls wherever comes the light of knowledge? The stronger the light the deeper the shadow. Where man is, there is mystery, for man is a being who knows and thinks, but cannot know all that he thinks of. Where God and man meet—as in religion they do—there must be mysteries, for there the finite meets the infinite; and infinite knowledge can but partially enlighten finite intelligence. He, then, who says he will only believe what he understands, asserts either a truism or a falsehood; he who says, "Where mystery begins religion ends," knows neither what mystery is nor yet what religion is.

But of those who do not refuse to believe religion because of its mysteries, and who come as Nicodemus came, and as all must come who would learn of Christ, ready to believe what He says because He is "a teacher come from God," some err by asking, and some by not asking, one or

other of these questions. Some who have received the mystery ask the second question, "How can these things be?" They seek to explain the difficulty; they will show you, if you will believe them, a simple, plain illustration, a definition which will remove all obscurity. Hence come wild speculations, subtle distinctions, monstrous conceptions, and gross heresies, all the fertile brood of errors that have sprung from that presumptuous and fatal curiosity which will insist on knowing "how these things can be." Truly it is pitiable to see men endeavouring to explain the nature of God. The emmet attempting to scan the intellect of the man who treads upon it, the animalcule attempting to measure the circumference of the earth, are things conceivable and rational when compared with man attempting to analyse his Maker.

But some, on the other hand, afraid of asking this second question, do not even venture to ask the first; they say, "This thing is a mystery—we cannot understand a mystery—there is great danger of error if we attempt to define it—much better not to think about it at all"; and the consequence is that they have most confused and vague ideas about it—often no ideas at all. Now, if it were safer not to think about a mystery, then God would not have revealed it to us. If He has revealed it, it is because He meant us to receive exactly what He said, neither more nor less; and if we never attempt to ascertain what that is, we are really without any opinion on the subject whatever. We escape the danger of believing error by not believing at all. We should avoid both these extremes. On the one hand, we should never attempt to explain a mystery; on the other hand, we should never shrink from defining it. The one is a duty, the other a sin. We must, and may, draw near the burning bush, for God calls to us out of it. But we

ought to and must take off our shoes as we draw near, for it is holy ground!

Now, brethren, if you have followed us so far, you can have no difficulty in applying what we have said to the greatest mystery of all—that of the blessed Trinity. Most reverently, with awe and dread, should we pursue our inquiries concerning this great truth, lest we go too far, farther than God has revealed; but, at the same time, most anxious should we be that we go far enough, that is, that we receive all that God has revealed to us concerning it. For the mystery which we are this day to consider is God himself. We have to see that we rightly receive what He has told us concerning His own nature, "whom to know is eternal life," whom not to know is eternal death. May He give us wisdom to speak, and you to hear aright of this great mystery. The revelation which He has made to us concerning His nature, we believe to be this, that He is Triune, three and yet one, one and yet three. "This is the Catholic faith that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity"; or, to state the doctrine of the Trinity in the form which is most familiar to us, we believe that there are three persons in one God. Now let us apply to this mystery the principles which we have seen to be applicable to all mysteries. Our first duty respecting it is, to see that we attach the right meaning to every one of its terms. Let us examine them. The doctrine of the Trinity is stated in two propositions: first, that God is one; secondly, that in that one God there are three Divine persons.

1st. We believe that God is one. Every Trinitarian is necessarily a Unitarian. Those who usurp this title cannot more strongly maintain the great truth of the unity of God than we do. It is the first and fundamental article of our faith that "Jehovah our God is one Jeho-

vah"; but what is it that we mean when we say that "God is one"? All that we mean, or can possibly mean by these words, is that God is *numerically one*—that there are not two or more Gods; in fact, it is simply the assertion that we are not polytheists, but theists; for Scripture, while it repeatedly asserts this unity of God, has nowhere defined in what it consists; it has nowhere revealed to us how God is one.

Of the nature of that Divine and ineffable essence, the unity of which we believe in, we know, and can possibly know nothing, and therefore we can say nothing of it *affirmatively;* we can only say of it *negatively* that there is not more than one such existence, that is, that we believe in a numerical unity as opposed to a plurality of Gods; but beyond this we know absolutely nothing. To attempt to go beyond this, and to define in what this unity consists, or to argue that it is incompatible with any other fact which God has revealed concerning His nature, is just to ask Nicodemus's second question, "How can these things be?" How God is one we know not; all we know is that there is no other being who is God.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no necessary and *à priori* opposition between the first proposition in the creed of the Trinitarian, that "God is one," and the second, "that in that one God there are three persons." It would be a manifest contradiction in terms to say of any *man* that he was three persons, because we know what the unity of a human being consists in, namely, that he is one person, not three; but it is no contradiction in terms to assert this of God, because we do not know in what His unity consists, and therefore cannot say whether it is or is not inconsistent with tripersonality.

2nd. Now that we have seen what we really understand

by the words "God is one," let us examine the second proposition, "that in that Divine unity there are three Divine persons." This word "person" proves a great stumbling-block to many, who suppose that it is adopted as exactly defining the nature of the distinctions in the Godhead, and that it is used in the same sense respecting the Trinity as it is when used respecting human beings. This is a very great mistake. This word "person" is not a Scriptural expression; that is, it never occurs in any passage of Scripture respecting the Trinity, and therefore it is not inserted in the creed as exactly defining the nature of the Trinity, but only as the word which most nearly expresses that truth which the Scriptures do positively assert, namely, *a threefold distinction in the Godhead.*

We find in Scripture three names, "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost." To each of these names is repeatedly added that of the one Supreme Being. The Father is called, Lord; the Son, Lord; and the Holy Ghost, Lord. If this were all that we found in Scripture, we should conclude that these three names were no more than three different titles of the one God. But we do find more than this in Scripture: we find each of these three names connected with distinct and personal actions; one is said to send, and another to be sent; one is said to proceed, and the other to be proceeded from; and we find, also, that these names are each joined with the personal pronouns I, thou, and he; that is, we see such language addressed to them, and used respecting them, in Scripture, as we, in our language of earth, would use respecting and address to distinct *persons*, and therefore we adopt this word "*person*" as the best we can find to express this distinction, which we see thus revealed as existing in the Godhead.

But while we thus use this word, as best expressing the truth that in the unity of God there is a threefold

distinction, we never for a moment suppose that we have, in using it, defined or explained the nature of that distinction. This, again, would be to attempt to define "how these things can be." All that we mean by this expression is, that in the unity of Deity there are three, and that these three are—we cannot tell how—distinct, and are—we cannot tell how—each Divine. This is a doctrine which, like the unity of God, rests solely upon revelation. Man could never have discovered either the Unity or the Trinity of God. To assume that the Unity is one of the truths of natural religion is to contradict all history. Men are naturally polytheists; it needed all the power of Omnipotence to retain one nation in the belief of the doctrine that God is one. It is from the Bible, and the Bible only, that men learn the Unity; and it is from the same Bible that we learn the Tri-unity of God. The question is not one that admits of abstract reasoning; it is to be decided solely by a collation of texts. It is simply this—Are there passages in Scripture which speak of the Son and of the Spirit as distinct from the Father, and also as Divine? If there are, then express this distinction as you may—adopt, instead of the word person, any other you may prefer, the fact remains the same—that this distinction exists; and this is all that we contend for when we say that there are "three persons in one God."

It is not our purpose now to cite the various texts which prove this second proposition; for our object, on this occasion, is rather to show you what it is that we are required to believe of the Trinity, than why we are to believe it; rather to point out to you what we are bound to prove, than to enter upon that proof.

What we are required to believe respecting the Trinity is this: 1st, that God is one, though in what that unity consists we know not; 2nd, that in God there are three

Divine persons, though in what the distinction between these persons consists we know not. Each of these truths we must receive upon its own sufficient evidence, carefully ascertaining the meaning of the terms we use. Neither of these truths must we seek to explain, or to ask concerning it, "How can these things be?" Both of these truths we must unite in our belief respecting God. To deny the first would be Tritheism; to deny the second would be Anti-Trinitarianism. The "Christian verity" compels us to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord. The Catholic religion forbids us to say that there be three Gods or three Lords; therefore we are Trinitarians. We hold "that in all things as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped" by all Christian men.

Thus far, brethren, we have been engaged in defining the doctrine of the Trinity, and in marking the limits of our faith respecting it. But there yet remains a most important question for decision; it is this—What place does this mystery hold in the Christian religion? Is it one of its essential articles—one of those doctrines which, unless we believe rightly, we shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly? There are many who answer, and more who would wish to answer, this question in the negative. Many who admit the doctrine of the Trinity to be true are unwilling to admit it to be essential to salvation. They see no reason how or why it should be so. "Can it be possible," they ask, "that God should have made the belief of a certain abstract and abstruse doctrine concerning His nature a condition of our salvation? Surely a man may be an excellent Christian, a truly pious and moral man, and yet be mistaken on this point. May we not truly love and obey God as our Father, even though we are ignorant of, or in error respecting, His nature?"

Now to this objection we have one plain and sufficient answer—It is for God, and not for us, to say what is, and what is not, essential to our salvation. Heaven is not our birthright, it is His gift; and to that gift He attaches such conditions as seem right to Him. If He has suspended our eternal happiness upon our belief of any one proposition, or any number of propositions, then assuredly we cannot be saved unless we believe them, one and all. There may not appear to us to be any necessary connection between a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and eternal happiness; but if God has joined them together we cannot sunder them. He has so joined them; He has declared that our eternal life consists in knowing Him, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent." He, therefore, who knows not Him, but some other God, and some other Christ than Him whom He has sent (and assuredly he knows neither the God nor the Christ of the Bible, who believes in a God who is not Triune, and a Christ not Divine), cannot have eternal life. He has required of all who become His disciples that they be baptized in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and He has declared that he who is so baptized and believes shall be saved. Without doubt, therefore, he who is not baptized into this confession of the Trinity, and who confirms this error by refusing to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, "must perish everlastingly." The moral fitness of the exclusion from heaven of the Anti-Trinitarian may not be as clear to us as that of the exclusion of the thief or the adulterer; but it is as certain, nevertheless, and as just, too, though we cannot see "how this thing can be."

But we would observe, further, that the alleged fact that this doctrine of the Trinity is a purely abstract one, so far from being an argument against its being essential

to salvation, is a very strong argument for its being so; for, if it be so abstract a doctrine, why is it revealed at all? Why has God made known to us this most mysterious and abstract dogma, one which, as you say, has no possible connection with our practical and moral life, unless it were for some reason or other of the most vital importance that we should believe it? It is no valid objection that we cannot see what that reason is. This life of ours is but a process of education to fit us for another. Man attains not to maturity in time. Life is but the childhood of eternity. How many studies must children pursue, how many facts must they learn which are essential to their after well-doing, but the use of which they cannot discern while they are learning them? It is not until the child becomes a man that he understands the importance and necessity of his childish studies. Until then he must believe his father's word that they are necessary.

Who, then, shall presume to say, of any fact or principle which his Heavenly Father requires of him to believe, that it is unnecessary or unimportant? Has he seen and comprehended the whole of the futurity that awaits him? Has he looked on into the most distant ages of eternity, and ascertained that never, at any of its most distant periods, in any one of all its conceivable circumstances, can he possibly find a knowledge of this truth essential to his happiness? Has he so fully acquainted himself with all the phases and all the laws of the life to come? Does he so thoroughly know all its duties, and employments, and pleasures, that he can possibly assert that not one of them is in any way connected with a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity? And if he has not, how can he dare to say that it is not, and cannot be, essential to his admission into Heaven? It is

a miserable mistake which many make who look upon this book merely as a collection of dogmas, the reception of which is a necessary condition of salvation. It is a series of mighty moral influences, each one of which our moral nature must undergo in order to be capable of eternal happiness. Every truth that it contains is designed to produce its own effect upon the soul of man in fitting it for its inheritance in light, by conforming it to the image of God; and who can say how much of our future happiness may be linked, not by arbitrary connection, but by most close and necessary relationship to our knowledge of this truth—that God is three, and yet one.

For myself, I do not hesitate to express my belief that the truths revealed in Scripture were not designed for our study only in this life. I hold it to be literally true of this very Word of God which we now possess, that though heaven and earth shall pass away, yet that it shall not pass away. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." There is enough of mystery and of wonder yet unexplained in revelation to furnish meditation for eternity. The last glimpse of the life to come vouchsafed to man displays, in the midst of the Heavenly host, "a Lamb as it had been slain." The last sound of Heavenly Hosannas that reached this earth was the song of the worshippers around the throne, who sing the song of praise to a Triune God, saying, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God of Hosts."

Surely these revelations are more than the scenery of a mystic vision, meant but to leave upon the mind of the beholder the vague idea of glory and of joy ineffable! Are they not rather foreshadowings of the nature of those joys—intimations that the great truths which here so often strain our intellects and try our faith, shall there be still the subjects of our delightful meditations? May it

not be that among the fountains of living waters, the ever fresh and flowing sources of knowledge and joy, of light and love to which Christ shall lead His flock, the great mysteries of the incarnation and the Trinity, ever unfathomable yet ever more fully revealed, shall be part of the ever-increasing intellectual pleasures of the redeemed, the very joy of whose joys consists in this—that they *see God?* But whether this be so or not, until we can prove that it is not so—until we can show that in no possible way can a belief in the Trinity be connected with the happiness of Heaven, we have no right to say of it that it cannot be one of the essential articles of our faith.

But we have all this time been arguing upon the supposition that the doctrine of the Trinity is an abstract one; while, so far from being so, it is, in fact, the least abstract and the most directly practical of all the doctrines revealed in Scripture; for how is it revealed to us? In no express and formal statement do we find the doctrine of the Trinity set forth,* but we find it interwoven through the whole of the Bible; it forms no distinct and separate part of revelation; but it is the inseparable essence of all revelation. We admit the truth of the objection which is so often brought against this doctrine, that there is no one indisputable text in Scripture which asserts, in so many words, that there are three persons in one God. But this very fact which is objected against us is the strongest possible argument for us. The Bible does not, we will grant, in any one passage, *expressly assert*, in so many words, the Trinity; but the Bible does, in every passage it contains, *imply* the Trinity. If we do not read, in any one sentence in the Bible, that God the

* 1 John v. 7, has been omitted from the Revised Version of the New Testament. It does not appear in any of the Greek Codices, and the sole authority for it seems to be a copy of Codex 173 made in the sixteenth century.—EDITOR.

Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are three in one, we do read in many sentences that the Jehovah who loved this world sent His only Son to save it, and that that Son was the Word, and that the Word was God, and that the Son has sent to us a Comforter, even the Spirit, and that that Spirit is the Lord. We find that such is the structure of the Divine writings that we cannot pay to any one of the three persons concerned in our redemption the homage due to Him, without acknowledging Him to be "by Himself both God and Lord"; we cannot believe in Christ who saves us, nor pray through Him to the Father who made us, nor seek the purifying influence of the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us, without acknowledging that "these three are one."

This great mystery of the Trinity underlies the whole act of our redemption; it meets us at the threshold of the visible Church into which we are admitted in the sacred name of the Triune God; we see it at the birth and at the baptism, at the cross and at the grave, at the resurrection and at the ascension of the founder of our religion. No man can rightly believe any one of these great practical facts in our Christian creed who does not believe the Trinity. Eliminate from the Scripture the doctrine of the Trinity, you resolve it into a mass of incoherent and contradictory assertions, an alternate series of revelations of Theism and Tritheism; restore it to its due place, and you find Scripture one harmonious whole, revealing to us our creation, redemption, and sanctification, by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Therefore, just because this great doctrine rests not upon any one isolated text, the genuineness of which might be disputed, but upon the whole concurrent testimony of Scripture, because it is not an abstract opinion which can be withdrawn from our creed without injury to any other dogma contained in it, but the one

great fact without which all our creed is a chaos and all our practice a delusion and a folly,—therefore we say, this doctrine is one which, "unless a man believe rightly, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Regardless of the accusation of bigotry and uncharitableness, we assert that a belief in the Trinity is essential, first, because God has said it is so; and, secondly, because He has so interwoven this doctrine with every other Christian doctrine, that we cannot withdraw it without unravelling the whole texture of the Christian faith.

And now, brethren, we have concluded the task we proposed to ourselves at the commencement of this discourse —of defining the doctrine of the Trinity, and of marking the exact limits of our faith respecting it. We have, we trust, shown you both the danger of presumptuous inquiry, and the necessity of accurate definition, in dealing with this great mystery. We would sum up the whole of our teaching on this subject in three rules, drawn from this interview between Christ the teacher, and Nicodemus the learner, of the Christian faith.

1. Approach this mystery, and all Christian mysteries, like Nicodemus, ready to receive whatever you may hear from Him whom you know to be "a teacher come from God." 2. Endeavour, like Nicodemus, accurately to understand the terms in which it is revealed, as becomes Christian students of Divine mysteries. 3. Unlike Nicodemus, reverence it when revealed, cautiously refraining from any attempt to understand how it is, as becomes Christian men who know that God is in Heaven, they on earth, and therefore that their words concerning Him should be few.

Above all, brethren, interweave this truth into your daily life and practice; live in the grace of Christ, in the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, so

shall you hold fast this great and precious truth of the ever blessed Trinity. Our intellectual perceptions of this great mystery may vary with the intellectual powers of each individual—our believing reception of it may be the same in all. The abyss of doubt, and error, and sin, that lies between us and the Heavenly Canaan is spanned by the cross of Christ—the bridge between time and eternity. Some walk thereon erect, with eagle-eye discerning, through storm and through mist, the glorious land that lies beyond. Some, less gifted, can but barely discern the clouds which rest upon the shore they seek; and others, of feebler vision still, can but see that spot to which they cling, as they struggle on step by step, with many a trembling glance upon the dark gulf that lies beneath. But all shall reach the shore, and all alike rejoice for ever in the presence of Him whom, though invisible, they saw by faith and loved—the Triune Jehovah, "God over all blessed for ever." Amen.

ORIGINAL SIN.

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PREACHED IN THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH, 1854.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me."—PSALM li. 5.

IT may seem a strange assertion to make, and yet I believe it to be a true one, that we are never more in danger of forgetting that we are sinners than when contemplating the sufferings and death of Him who died to save us from our sins. It certainly does seem, at first, that, if ever our sense of sin should be deep and humbling, and our sorrow for it keen, it should be when we look upon Gethsemane and Calvary. Where should we go, you may say, to learn how dreadful a thing sin is, how odious to God, how dangerous for us, if not to the place where we see its guilt endured, its penalty paid by Him who suffered in our stead? When should we truly mourn for our transgressions and weep for our iniquities, if it be not when we look upon the wounding and the bruising of Him on whom was laid "the chastisement of our peace," and by whose stripes we are healed? And yet a moment's reflection will show that this is just the occasion on which we are most likely to forget all this; for this death and passion of Christ is a sight so awful, so wonderful, so pitiful, that it alone engages all our thoughts and all our feelings—it is in itself of such intense and absorbing interest that we have no thoughts to give either to its

causes or its results. In all the scenes of those three days of sorrow, as they pass in sad and solemn procession before us, one figure stands out alone in the terrible greatness of its agony: as we see it now kneeling in the gloom of the garden, now bleeding from the scourge, now fainting beneath the heavy cross, now nailed to it expiring—we have eyes and hearts for it alone. Like the first tearful spectators of His sufferings, while we weep for Him, we forget to weep for ourselves. So it comes to pass, that we see the "sweat, as it were great drops of blood," fall from Him in His anguish; and in our horror at the sight, forget that it is the burden of our sins beneath which He is groaning. We hear Him pray that "if it be possible this cup may pass from Him," and remember not that our guilt is part of its bitterness. We listen to the mysterious cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and think not that our iniquities are amongst those which at that moment hide from Him His father's face.

You see how natural such a state of feeling is at such a moment; and yet you can also see how dangerous it is, for we run the risk of mistaking these merely natural emotions of pity and of sorrow for true penitence. Our hearts are naturally so hard, so averse to all religious impressions, that when we find them deeply moved, we are apt to imagine they are broken and contrite; and so we proceed to excite our feelings of sympathy, and pity, and admiration, and even love for our suffering and dying Saviour, and imagine that we are giving abundant proof of our piety, while we are only indulging our natural sensibility—forgetting that we may admire and sympathise and adore, and even love, but that, unless we also repent and believe, all this emotion is but as "the morning cloud and the early dew, that passes away," and leaves the soil as hard and barren as ever—forgetting,

too, that sinful men have no right to indulge in unmixed sympathy with the sufferings of our Lord. Unfallen and sinless angels might indeed thus look on Christ on the cross—but we may never do so; in us, repentance should always mingle with our love, and shame with our sorrow; we should never call to mind what Christ has done for us, without remembering, too, why He has done it.

In such a spirit, it is clear, our Church designed that we should contemplate the closing scenes of our Lord's life. She has provided the season of Lent, in which her children may prepare, by humiliation and repentance, for their annual pilgrimage to the cross and to the tomb. The penitential tone of all her services at this season; the solemn and humble confession of sin with which it commences; the earnest entreaties for forgiveness and for strength, which, during its continuance, she supplies for our use; the subjects for meditation suggested in the lessons and epistles she has appointed for it—all indicate that her purpose was to direct our thoughts upon our own exceeding sinfulness, so that by "worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness," we might learn to value all the more the ransom paid for us upon the day of the crucifixion; and might celebrate, with a deeper and a holier joy, the morning of the resurrection, for having first pondered on the bitterness of the bondage from which it freed us, and thus come at last to love much, by understanding how much we have been forgiven.

For such a season and such a purpose our text supplies a fitting subject. If any portion of God's word can teach us what sin is, and how it should be looked upon by us, it is this Psalm of David—the deepest and most heartfelt confession ever uttered by man, poured forth by a saint of God in the first bitterness of his sorrow for his greatest sin. The Holy Spirit who inspired him to utter

that confession has recorded it for our learning. We are permitted to look upon that solemn and even awful sight —a penitent saint alone upon his knees before his God, to hear his groans and prayers and see his tears, that we, too, may learn like him to kneel and weep and pray, and make confession of our sins to God.

Let us, then, consider this confession of sin. We find, on examining it, that it is twofold—there are two things present to David's mind to be confessed and mourned over: the first is the sin he has just been guilty of; the second is the sinfulness of his nature. David speaks under a deep sense of the guilt of actual sin; he mourns over it; he sees it in its true light as an offence against God—"For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me; against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." He has also a deep sense of the guilt of original sin; he laments not only what he has done, but what he is—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"; and his prayer, accordingly, is not only for pardon for sins, but for deliverance from sinfulness—"Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Now, what is remarkable in David's prayer is that it unites these two things—sin and sinfulness, and presents them both for forgiveness. They are not generally united in the confessions of men; some will acknowledge one, and some the other—very few will plead guilty to both. Some will confess to actual sin—they will say, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," but they will not admit that they are altogether sinful, that there is no good thing in them, that they are "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"; while, again, others will acknowledge the fact of original sin, will lament

that their nature is altogether evil; but, then, they use this fact to excuse their actual sins—they plead that they were "shapen in iniquity" as a set off against the accusation that they have sinned and done evil in the sight of God.

This latter is the course most generally taken; the language of many professing Christians is something of this kind—"I know I am a great sinner; but then human nature is so very corrupt—we are all sinful beings; none is perfect—'there is none that doeth good, no not one'"; and so they will dilate and dwell upon the original guilt and corruption of human nature, as a sufficient excuse for their own transgressions. There is a kind of proud humility in the confessions of such persons; they make a merit of admitting that to be a fault, which they secretly feel they might excuse as an infirmity; though there is so much to be said in their defence, yet they will even acknowledge themselves "miserable sinners." They will not use the prayer of the Pharisee—"God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are," but they will use a kind of converse of it—"God, I thank Thee I am as other men are, that I can plead, in common with all my fellow-men, the infirmity of a fallen nature in mitigation of my offences." But of this original sin, as a thing in itself odious and evil and deserving wrath and needing to be repented of, they have no idea. It never makes a part of their confession—their prayer is for forgiveness of guilt, not for deliverance from corruption. And, even of those actual sins which all men acknowledge more or less, few, if any of us, have any adequate idea of their number, or of their enormity; few can honestly say with David, "My sin is ever before me"; so that our confession of sin is often deficient in quantity, and always deficient in quality. We may safely

say that of the two evils which David here mourns over, many in their confessions omit one altogether, and none of us feel the other as we ought.

In order, then, to deepen our impression of these two evils, let us consider the nature of human sin. Let us try for once to understand what we mean when we say that we are "miserable sinners."

To-day we purpose considering the subject of Original Sin—what it is that David means, when he says, "I was shapen in iniquity"; and on next Sunday, Actual Sin—what David means when he says, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me."

We say, then, that this declaration, "I was shapen in iniquity," implies two things—guilt and corruption: it means that every human being is born into this world with the wrath of God abiding *on* him, and the corruption of sin abiding *in* him; he is, as our catechism describes him, "born in sin and a child of wrath"—there is guilt imputed to him; God looks upon him before he has spoken, or acted, or thought, as a guilty being: there is corruption inherent in him; God sees in him a being who contains a germ of sin which will grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength. This guilt which is imputed to him is the guilt of Adam, his representative, and this sin which is derived by him is that of Adam, his progenitor. This is our twofold inheritance from our first parent—this is original sin.

Let us take each of these in its order. Our first proposition is that we inherit from Adam guilt; that he stood before God the representative of all humanity—their federal head, in whom they entered into covenant with their Maker. In him we all once stood upright, in him we were tried, in him we fell, in him we were judged and condemned. We know that this seems at first a harsh

and startling doctrine that we should be held guilty of another's offence; many who admit that they inherit a corrupt nature indignantly deny that they inherit a guilty one; they ask, How can you reconcile it with God's character for justice, that He should look on us as having a share in an act committed thousands of years before we were born, and to which, of course, we were no consenting parties? Now, we shall have a few words to say on the justice or injustice of this, but we have first to ask, Is it true? The first great question for us, concerning any doctrine, must be, Has God said it? Is it written? If so, it must be just and good—"Let God be true and every man a liar."

Turn, then, to Romans, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Observe, there is a comparison made here between the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ; the effect of the one is to make many sinners, of the other to make many righteous; and the manner in which these results are effected is the same—"As by the disobedience of Adam, so by the obedience of Christ." In whatever way the obedience of Christ makes us righteous, "so," that is in the same way, the disobedience of Adam made us sinners. Now, how does the obedience of Christ make us righteous? Is it not by imputation? He is our representative; He obeyed the law for us. God looks upon His people as having obeyed the law in Him, so that He is said to be "the end of the law to every one that believeth." Clearly, then, in the same way Adam must have stood as our representative; and, having broken the law in that capacity, God therefore looks on us as having broken it in him. Nor is this the only passage where Christ and Adam are thus contrasted as the heads respectively of

fallen and redeemed humanity. In 1 Cor. xv. 45, our Lord is called "the last Adam," that is the second representative of man, to whose heavenly image we shall be conformed as we have been to the earthly image of the first Adam. The word of God, then, expressly declares that in Adam's sin we sinned, and in Adam's sentence we were judged as surely as that in Christ's obedience we obeyed, and in his death we satisfied the law of God.

But to the formal assertion of this doctrine St. Paul adds, in the same fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, a proof of its truth, which is only too clear to the understanding of all men. He adduces, in evidence, one fact familiar to us all—it is the fact that all men die. Here is a truth which none can gainsay; but death is "the wages of sin,"—whoever dies, therefore, has earned death by sin. If, then (St. Paul argues in the 12th verse), "death has passed upon all men," as we know it has, it must be because "all have sinned"; but all who have died have not been guilty of sins in their own proper persons, for though "sin is not imputed where there is no law," nevertheless, "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,"—that is, wilfully and knowingly. What, then, was the sin for which they suffered death? It could have been none other than that of Adam, their representative; it is "through the offence of one that many are dead"; it is by "one man's offence that death reigned by one"—in other words, the death of those against whom no actual sin could be charged is a clear proof that they were held guilty of the original sin of Adam, their federal head.

Here, then, we have unanswerable evidence of the truth of our first proposition, that from our first parent we inherit a guilty nature. Stern and strange as this doctrine may seem, it is not more stern or more strange

than the undeniable fact which proves it. We take the man who denies it to the bed-side, where lies the corpse of a new-born babe that has just breathed out its few short hours of painful life, just opened its eyes upon this world of sin and sorrow and then closed them for ever, and we ask him, Why is this? Pain has been here and death; what brought them? What had that little sufferer done that it should have writhed its limbs in agony and drawn its little breath in sobs? What crime had it committed that the dread penalty of death should be thus exacted from it, and its young life untimely snatched away? Account for this—explain to us the reason for the pain and death of this harmless babe; or, if you cannot, receive the explanation given you in the Word of God, that it has suffered and died because it "was shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

But this fact that death has passed upon all alike not only proves the doctrine of original sin, but supplies, to a certain extent, an answer to the objections made to that doctrine on the score of justice; for the injustice of imparting to us Adam's guilt is certainly no greater than that of inflicting upon us Adam's punishment. There is no greater difficulty in admitting that we inherit from him a guilty soul than there is in admitting that we inherit from him a diseased and dying body. If you reject as inconsistent with God's justice the notion that you are born an heir of wrath because Adam sinned, how will you deal with the fact that you are born an heir of pain and death because Adam died? or how will you deal with the fact that your suffering for the sin of your first parent is but one instance of that general law by which the innocent in this world suffer for the guilty? The sins of parents are visited upon "their children, even to the third and fourth generation." The intemperate man

bequeaths to his offspring a sickly body, the libertine a life-long shame, the criminal a blighted name, the spendthrift an impoverished estate. The sins of one age are visited upon the next. A cruel tyrant goes to his grave in peace and bequeaths to his mild and just successor a revolution and a scaffold. A godless statesman suffers a nation to grow up in ignorance, and the next generation reap the bitter fruits of his neglect in misery and crime. A faithless ministry leave their flocks unguarded and unfed, and they who come after them toil painfully, and almost hopelessly, to recall those sheep to the fold, from which the carelessness of others had suffered them to stray.

Wherever we turn, then, we see men suffering for the sins and smarting for the follies of others; and if this be the general law under which we live, if half the pains and sorrows that we experience be but the consequences of another's guilt, and if this be consistent with the justice of Him "who doeth all things well," why should it startle you when we ask you to admit a fact which is not one whit more opposed to justice, nay, which throws the only gleam of light along this dark chain of sinful cause and sorrowful effect, namely, that we not only suffer the consequences, but also share the guilt of our first parent's first offence?

This much, at least, you must acknowledge—that no objection can be urged against the one that does not apply with equal force to the other. Whatever you say against the doctrine of original sin, as revealed in the Word of God, the same you must say against the fact of vicarious suffering, as ordained in the providence of God. You may, indeed, object equally to both; you may evade the argument drawn from the analogies of providence, by denying that there is a providence or a God; you may

take refuge from the mysteries and difficulties of religion in the greater mysteries and difficulties of atheism. But short of this you cannot consistently stop; there is no middle ground for you between the desperate conclusion of the infidel, who rises from the problem of human misery and human sin, exclaiming, "There is no God!" and the humble submission of the Christian, who, reading in his Bible that he was "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," bows low in the dust before the veil of mystery that hides from him the presence of his God, exclaiming, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But let us examine a little more closely into the justice of this transaction. You say it is unjust that I should be held to have sinned in Adam; what, then, is it you would demand? A trial in your own person, that you should be placed, as Adam was, in a state of probation, made upright with the option of so continuing if you could; this, you will say, would have been just. But if you were so placed, do you imagine that you would have fared better than he did? Was he not the very perfection of humanity? Was there any weakness in him there would not have been in you? Is there any strength you could have that he had not? What could you have been at best but another Adam, sure to yield to the very same temptation to which he yielded? Do you not see that your representative was all you could possibly have been, and therefore that your trial in him was the very fairest you could possibly have had? Had he succeeded, you would have inherited happiness: he failed, you inherit misery. But were this trial, instead of being made by one man once for all, to be made by each man for himself, the only difference would be that we should have millions of falls instead of one. What difference, then, is there in point of justice between this trial having been made for you or

by you, if the result would be the same in either case, and if you are only held guilty of a sin which you would assuredly commit had you the opportunity of committing it?

But though from the history of the fall itself we can thus clearly vindicate the imputation of Adam's sin from the charge of injustice, yet it is from the history of our redemption that we draw our fullest and most triumphant proof of its justice. Imputation is to be seen in our salvation as well as in our condemnation. If it be true that by the imputed "offence of one many were made sinners," it is also true that by the imputed "obedience of One many are made righteous." If we are accounted to have fallen in the first Adam, we are accounted to have risen in the second Adam. Were it not for this fact there might still remain, even in the minds of those who admitted the doctrine of original sin, a lurking and uneasy doubt of its justice. But when we see Christ, our representative, by one act undoing all the wrong which our first representative inflicted on us; when, against the painful mystery of sin imputed and inherent, we can set the glorious mystery of righteousness imputed and imparted; when we know, therefore, that none ever perished because of original sin, for that condemnation is not for having sinned in Adam, but for having refused to accept the righteousness of Christ; when we can see that if God has "concluded all under sin," it is that "He may have mercy upon all"; these doubts and difficulties give place to gratitude and praise, and we cry out—"Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Who, then, denies that he has sinned in Adam? Who insists upon his independence of that covenant which was made in Paradise? We tell him, You cannot disown the

covenant of death without disowning also the covenant of life. You cannot refuse to be considered a sinner in Adam without refusing to be considered holy in Christ. You cannot say, I will not be condemned for another's disobedience without saying, I will not be saved by another's obedience. Reject, then, if you will, the doctrine of original sin; resolve to stand alone in your integrity. Remember that in that case you must be alone also in your guilt. Cast off Adam's sin, prepare to defend your own; gird up yourself for argument with God; prepare to stand before His tribunal in your own strength, unimpaired, as you say it is, and therefore unaided by Christ, and stake your soul upon the issue! Or, if you shrink from this, accept the only alternative:—admit the imputed sin that you may receive the imputed righteousness. Acknowledge that you are born under wrath, that you may be born again in love; confess that you were "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," that you may receive a "clean heart and a right spirit be renewed within you."

But our picture of a "miserable sinner" is not yet complete. Fallen man inherits not only a guilty but a corrupt nature. He is, as our ninth Article describes him, "very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil."

Let us consider, then, what is this "fault and corruption of our nature." How far are we gone from original righteousness? To see this we must gain some idea of what original righteousness was; to decide how much our nature is warped, we must apply the rule to which it originally corresponded. It is hard for us to do this—hard for us miserable sinners to conceive the idea of perfect righteousness, to look up from where we lie shattered by our fall, and try to measure the height from which we

have fallen. Let us, however, make the attempt. A perfect creature is a being exactly fitted to fulfil the end for which it was created. A perfect man, then, must be a man exactly fitted, in all respects, to fulfil the end for which he was created—namely, the service of God; and the original righteousness of man must, therefore, have consisted in the fitness of every faculty of his soul to obey the will of God. His understanding, his will, his affections—for these are the three faculties of man's soul—must have been in such a state of perfection as would allow of his obedience being fully and completely rendered. In the understanding, then, there must have been perfect knowledge of God's will; in the will, perfect conformity to it; in the affections, perfect subjection to the will and to the understanding. Take away any one of these, and you leave the man incapable of obedience. Take knowledge from the understanding, and the will becomes a blind faculty, a force with nothing to direct it; take from the will its conformity to God's will, the enlightened mind would see what was best—the depraved will would follow what was worst; and let both the understanding be enlightened and the will good, yet if the affections be not under perfect control, they will effectually hinder the man from perfectly serving God. That original righteousness consisted in these three things is plain from the language in which Scripture describes the restoration of this righteousness—the renewal of the lost image of God in man. If we combine the parallel passages in which St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, describes this new or renewed man, we find that he is created anew in "knowledge," "righteousness," and "true holiness"*—that is, he has been restored to knowledge in his understanding, righteousness

* Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10.

in his will, holiness in his affections. A comparison of the many detached passages which speak of the qualities of the regenerate gives the same result. In one place they are described as having "the eyes of their understanding enlightened"*—as those in whose hearts God "hath shined, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory";† in another, as "those who are made willing in the day of His power,"‡ or "whose delight is in the law of the Lord."§ And again, they are described as those who have "crucified the flesh,"‖ in whose members sin no longer reigns, "that they should obey it in the lusts thereof."¶

Original sin must, then, consist in the loss of each of these qualities. When man fell his mind lost its divine knowledge—his will, its original uprightness—his affections, their wonted subjection. Darkness in his intellect, rebellion in his will, and lawlessness in his appetites, are the three defects that prove him to have been "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

Let us trace this evil in each faculty of the fallen man. It is darkness in the understanding. It has wrought such blindness in the soul of man that it cannot see God. The religious history of man is but a series of illustrations of this truth. What are all the religions of antiquity but the gropings and guessings of a blinded intellect, vainly seeking the light of truth which yet was shining full upon it? The glory of the Eternal Power and Godhead was reflected in all its brightness around the very temples where men, in the "darkness of their foolish hearts," were bowing down before the images of "birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things."**

* Eph. i. 18. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‡ Psalm cx. 3.
§ Psalm i. 2. ‖ Gal. v. 24. ¶ Rom. vi. 12.
** Romans i. 23.

A never-dying soul was in the breast of every one of those millions who, ignorant of their own immortality, have lived and died even as the brutes that perish, or walked mournfully to the grave longing to believe that they could be immortal. The tradition of a pure faith was the inheritance of every one of those nations who, at this day, are to be seen sunk in the grossest idolatry, "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts."*

Look where we may, on every shrine which man has built for himself, we read the same inscription—"To the Unknown God!" To whatever page in the great history of human error we may turn, we find in ever varying characters the same record—"The world by wisdom knew not God."

Do you ask for a clearer proof that our spiritual vision has been darkened by sin? The history of the very book that asserts the fact shall prove it. What is this book? It is the Word of God. The holy men of old, whose sayings are recorded here, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But how are we assured of this? How does this Word of God accredit itself to man? By its miraculous evidences. It comes to us attested by signs and wonders and miracles. But why do we need such evidence of its divine origin? Why do we not instinctively recognise the voice of our Maker? Why must this argument be addressed to our senses to prove that which, to our spiritual apprehension, should have been self-evident? Why is it that we must needs see signs and wonders upon earth before we can believe that the light of the Sun of Righteousness is shining upon us from the heavens? Even because our understanding is darkened,

* Eph. iv. 18.

and "the light shining in darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not." Or, when we have admitted this book to be the book of God, why is it that we find it so perplexing, so full of difficulties and seeming contradictions? How comes it that the skilled and powerful intellect which masters all problems in science, all difficulties in art, is utterly at fault in the science of religion? How is it that he, who can discover with unerring sagacity the most hidden mysteries of nature, fails in extracting the true meaning of a text? And even when, by the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, we have gathered from Scripture its true meaning, why is it that we find such difficulty in retaining and preserving it? No sooner is the sacred deposit of the truth committed to the charge of men than it is corrupted by innumerable heresies—every truth that composes it warped and distorted into some strange form of error.

It is not so in other sciences. The laws of physical or mathematical science once discovered become unchangeable axioms; their truths once established are established for all ages, and each succeeding discovery is only an expansion or an illustration of them; but theology is the only science which seems never to advance—it is ever beginning; its professors are as much at variance now about its elementary definitions as they were eighteen hundred years ago. They are still prying curiously into its mysteries, stumbling at its simplest truths, forgetting its first principles, putting forth old exploded fallacies as confidently as if they never had been refuted, or inventing new doctrines as eagerly as if novelty were in religion the evidence of truth.

How can we account for this? Whence comes this strange confusion and uncertainty, this forgetfulness and perversity in the minds of men, whenever they are en-

gaged upon the study of divine truth, if it be not from this, that there is in the intellect of every one of Adam's offspring this original defect that it cannot discern the things of God? The light that is in us is darkened, because we are "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

Original sin is disobedience in the will; man is a rebel from his birth. In proof of this we will not cite those overt acts of sin which necessarily imply a rebellious will. Our object is to show that, before the commission of a single act, there is in the will of the natural man a tendency by which it instinctively resists the will of God; and here again the history of this book shall supply us with the evidence we seek. Conspicuous among the revelations of God to man recorded in its pages stands the "giving of the law"—the law, which says to man, This shalt thou do, and this thou shalt not do; obey and live —disobey and die. But what must be the state of the human will, how far must it have gone from its original righteousness, when it needs such restraint and such direction as this? How evil must the tendencies of that nature be, which needs a command to love God—a warning not to murder, or steal, or lie? A perfect being could no more have needed such commandments than we need laws to bid us breathe or to forbid us to starve. The revelation of a moral law proves clearly the immorality of the will to which it is addressed. That which should have been a law within us instinctively obeyed has become a law without us restraining instinctive disobedience. The manner, too, in which this law was given proves the original sinfulness of our will; it was given from out the thick darkness, amidst thunderings and lightnings and the sound of the trumpet waxing loud and long; so dreadful was the voice which proclaimed it that they who heard it prayed that they might hear it no more lest

they should die. But why should the revelation of God's will be heralded by such sounds and sights of terror? Why should not that day in which God spake to man have been a day of joy and gladness, a day when heaven should have smiled its brightest, and earth have looked her loveliest, and man have rejoiced and sung for joy that he had heard his Maker's voice? Just because that voice was addressed to a race of rebels; these thunderings and lightnings, this dreadful sound of the trumpet waxing loud and long, are meant to awe into submission the rebellious will, to make the law a terror to those whose nature it is to be evil-doers, by such tremendous proofs that He who spake it "beareth not the sword in vain."

Alas! how far must man have gone from his original righteousness, when he needs to be thus frightened into obedience, scared into doing that which it should have been his natural desire, his highest delight to do—the will of God!

How clear it is that if man does not instinctively obey, it is for the same reason that he does not instinctively understand, even because he was "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"!

Original sin is lawlessness in the affections. All our affections and desires were originally lawful; they were part of that nature which God pronounced "very good." To want, and therefore to desire, is essential to the character of a creature. God is the only Being who is self-existent and self-sufficient. There was no sin, then, originally in any human affection, nor is there now a desire natural to man for which there is not provided its proper and lawful object; but an affection tends to evil when it seeks its object at a time or in a manner that is forbidden, and to yield to its importunity at such a moment is to commit sin. Our affections, then, become

sinful when they become "inordinate," when they rule the will instead of being ruled by it, and compel us, in spite of our better judgment, to obey them in the lusts thereof.

Now, we have no need to prove that this is our case; for who among us will claim to be master of himself? Who can say that his affections, his desires, his passions, never get the better of him; that he never yields to anger, or fear, or jealousy, or envy; that he never exceeds by gluttony or intemperance; that he is never in any thing "drawn away of his own lusts and enticed"? Is it not our daily experience that we are not our own masters—that our unruly wills and affections are too strong for us? What is so common as for men to say: "I am very sorry that I did such or such an act, but I was so tempted, I was so provoked, so carried away by my feelings at the moment, that I could not help it"? But why could you not have helped it? Why are you thus powerless before your own inferior nature,—thus tied and bound by the chain of your sinful lusts? Because the original corruption of your nature has deprived you of the control over your desires; there is no more holiness in your affections than there is righteousness in your will, or knowledge in your mind—you are "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

Such, brethren, is the nature and the extent of the original sin that we derive from Adam. You see how deadly is this evil which has been infused into our nature. In our "flesh dwells no good thing;" there is no soundness in our fallen humanity: "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." But still, it may be urged in excuse (for sinful man, true to the tradition of his first offence and his first trial, is ever fertile in ex-

cuses)—"This original sin which you have described is, after all, rather an infirmity than a fault; even admitting that man is all you say he is, it is his nature to be so, and therefore he merits not punishment but pity—he may have need to ask for help, but surely not for forgiveness." This is an excuse which few will venture to plead in so many words, for it is nothing less than a denial of God's right to judge the beings he has made; but it is an excuse which, perhaps, every one of us has, at some time or other, secretly pleaded in his heart; for from the first man seeks to charge his sins on God.

Now, to such a plea it were a sufficient answer to say that whatever we may think of the justice or injustice of such an arrangement, the fact is that original sin is punished, and therefore must require forgiveness, and that it were wiser for the objector to spend in seeking that forgiveness the time he wastes in proving that he does not need it.

But as our object is not merely to silence, but if possible to convince and persuade men, we would observe, further, that the whole strength of this argument lies in the assumption that sin is an offence against one of God's attributes only, namely, his justice, overlooking the fact that it is also an offence against his holiness. Sin considered as a crime provokes God's wrath, but sin considered as a defilement displeases His infinite purity: He who tells us that He "will by no means clear the guilty," tells us also that "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." This is a truth which we sinful beings easily lose sight of. We whose nature is all leavened with impurity can have no conception how odious and loathsome sin must appear in the sight of an infinitely holy Being. Perhaps we may form a faint and remote idea of it, by thinking of the disgust and loathing with which a highly refined

mind revolts from whatever is coarse or foul in language or in act, or the shrinking horror with which we look upon some repulsive form of disease, when in spite of all our pity for the sufferer we turn with unconquerable loathing from the sight of that which he suffers from; and yet this gives us but a faint idea of the odiousness of sin in the sight of God. The very least and most passing thought of evil that ever crossed the mind of the holiest saint is inconceivably more offensive to Him than the foulest crime or the most repulsive sight could be to us. Think, then, how the vileness and the corruption, the loathsomeness and the leprosy of a being all sin must look when set in the bright searching light of His countenance. If, even in this sinful world, the profligate and the profane feel rebuked and abashed by the presence of the pure, and the diseased and deformed hide their defects from the glance of their fellow man, how can the sinner "shapen in iniquity" hope to meet the searching glance of Him whose "eyes are as a flame of fire"?

Think of this, dear friends and brethren, when next you are tempted to plead the sinfulness of your nature in excuse for your sins; think that the one offends the holiness as much as the other offends the justice of God, and both alike require His pardoning mercy and His sanctifying grace; both equally need to be confessed and mourned over.

Let the imperfection and the frailty of our common nature be admitted as the excuse for the offences of your fellow-men committed against you; but never let them be urged in palliation of those you have committed against God. When you kneel before Him, remember, not that you are imperfect, but that He is perfect. Bring before Him this original fault and corruption of your nature, not as an infirmity to be pitied, but as a fault to be par-

doned. Confess to Him, even with shame and confusion of face, that you "are altogether corrupt and become abominable," that in you "dwelleth no good thing." Until you can do this, you are not truly penitent—you do not rightly understand all the misery of a "miserable sinner."

If what we have this day set before you shall in anywise help you to such an understanding; if our descriptions of this leprosy of our fallen nature have caused one sinner to lay his hand upon his mouth and cry, "Unclean, unclean"; if we have succeeded in giving depth to your repentance, and humility to your confessions, and earnestness to your prayers for mercy—then has our time been not unprofitably spent, and it shall not have been in vain that we have asked you to commence this penitential season by the consideration of this confession of a true penitent—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

ACTUAL SIN.

ACTUAL SIN.

PREACHED AT THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH, 1854.

"Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."—PSALM li. 4.

THE subject for our consideration to-day is, in one respect, an easier, in another, a more difficult one, than that which engaged our attention on Sunday last. In speaking of actual sin, we are not obliged, as we were when speaking of original sin, to prove its existence. There is no need of any laboured comparison of texts to convince you that we have, every one of us, committed sin. No one denies this. There is not one here who will not acknowledge that he has often "left undone that which he ought to have done and done that which he ought not to have done." So far, then, our task is an easy one. The indictment which we are about to prefer is one to which every one who hears it will readily and freely plead guilty. But it is the very readiness of this admission which constitutes our greatest difficulty in dealing with this subject; for the sin which is so freely and willingly acknowledged by all can be but little felt by any. There is something novel and startling to many in the doctrine of original sin when fully and clearly stated; it arrests men's attention—it rouses them to think, if not to fear, when we tell them that they were "born in sin and the children of wrath." The very opposition which

this doctrine often provokes compels at least some inquiry and reflection which may end in conviction. But, unhappily, there is nothing startling or novel—nothing that moves men either to think or to fear in the announcement that we have all "sinned against God, and done evil in His sight." The fact is so familiar that we have become indifferent to it. Every one knows it; we have been taught it so soon as we could learn anything; we have heard and said so often that we are "miserable sinners," that we wonder any one could be at the pains to insist upon that which nobody questions.

It is this which makes our task to-day far more arduous than that which engaged us last Sunday. Then we had to define and prove an abstruse doctrine; to-day we have to illustrate and enforce a trite and familiar truth. Then we had to win your assent to what was probably new to many of you; to-day we have to arouse your attention to what is only too well known to all. May He, whose office it is to convince of sin, be with us in the consideration of this subject, and give both to the preacher and the hearers a deeper and a truer sense both of the guilt and the number of the many sins which we all acknowledge that we have committed against Him.

Let us then, in the first place, consider the guilt of actual sin. To understand this we will examine the subject in its very simplest form. We will ask you to select, each one, that sin which seems to him to have been the very smallest he has ever committed, and to call to mind all the extenuating circumstances that attended it; and we propose to inquire how much of guilt is involved in that one small sin. Let us ask, first, against whom has it been committed? Against God. It is thus that David describes his transgressions—"Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." Why does he say, "Against Thee

only"? He had sinned grievously against Uriah and Bathsheba; and yet he says, "Against Thee only have I sinned." It is evident that the thought of this sin being against God swallows up all other considerations. But this is of the essence of all sin; it was not more a part of David's great offence than it is of the least that we can commit. Whatever may make the difference in guilt between one sin and another, they are all alike in this—that they are against God; for they are all transgressions of His holy law. And yet how seldom does this fact find its due place in our confessions of sin? Is it not the case that to the generality of men the sins which are against God seem less heinous than those which are against men? Is it not true that in enumerating their sins men are apt to think far more of the last half of the decalogue than the first? How frequently do we hear such language as this—"I have not been a great sinner; I have never injured any *man!*"—as if those sins only were great which are committed against men, and those which are against God were comparatively of little moment. Such men parody the confession of David; instead of saying, "Against Thee only have we sinned," they say, "We have only sinned against Thee."

And yet it is clear that this fact—that a sin is against God—is that in which consists the greatness of its guilt; for, even among men, we measure the guilt of crimes, not by the actual injury resulting from them, but by their injurious tendencies. The traitor who has attempted the life of his sovereign, the rebel who has tried to overthrow his authority, are rightly held as guilty when they fail as if they had succeeded. They are punished, not for the harm that their rebellion or their treason has done, but for the harm which rebellion and treason must do if not repressed.

Now, what is a sinner but a rebel? He who sins has defied the sovereign authority of his God; he has set the will of the creature against the will of the Creator. It is true that such rebellion can harm only the rebel himself —the wickedness of man no more extends to God than his goodness does. The potsherd of the earth seeks in vain to strive with his Maker; nevertheless, his sin has in it all the malignity of treason. The revolt of his will, if it were only successful, would end in the dethronement of God. If every sinner had his way what would there be on earth but a wild and lawless anarchy of contending wills and passions, or else a fierce and sullen despotism of evil? Is it not plain, then, that disobedient opposition to God is the very deadliest crime possible in a system, the well-being of which depends upon the perfect submission of all things to His will, and that a sinner is a miserable anomaly in the midst of an obedient universe—a wretched rebel against almighty power and eternal law, who, for the sake of the peace and safety of creation, must be subdued or destroyed utterly and for ever?

But in this your one small sin against God you are guilty, not only of rebellion, but of ingratitude. You have sinned against a Father who has made you, and preserved you, and blessed you with blessings innumerable. Would you know how great is your guilt in this respect? Measure it by His goodness; try to number up all His mercies; think how great is the sum of them; how He has "crowned you with loving-kindness and tender mercies," renewing them for you daily and hourly, so that "goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life"; and then think how great is the ingratitude of your sin against such a God!

It is of this vice that He accuses sinners when He calls upon heaven and earth to judge His great controversy

with disobedient and rebellious man—"'Hear, O, heavens, and give ear, O, earth;' hear O, ye heavens, that I have spread above him in beauty and in glory, wherein I have set the sun to give him light by day and the moon by night, and the myriad host of starry lights, those ever speaking witnesses of My eternal power and goodness, 'whose sound hath gone out into all the earth,' and whence I have sent him rain and fruitful seasons in their grateful and ever recurring changes, 'filling his heart with joy and gladness.' And give ear, O earth, which I have given him for his dominion, made beautiful exceedingly with all possible forms of grandeur and of loveliness, and from whose ever teeming bosom I have made to spring for his enjoyment all things that are pleasant to the eye or good for food. Hear this My controversy with the sons of men! 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.'" * But this is not all your guilt; your sin is against God, who is not only your Maker and Preserver but your Redeemer too; you have sinned against God the Father who so loved you that for your sake He spared not His own dear Son, but freely gave Him up to die for you, and against the Son of God, who left for you "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was," and "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"; and against the Holy Spirit who pleads and strives with every sinner, and who dwells in the heart of every child of God whom by your sin you have done despite to and grieved. Ah! this is the most grievous charge against you—the darkest shade in your guilt—that you have forgotten "that the Lord is your rock, and that the high God is your Redeemer."†

* Isaiah i. 2. † Psalm lxxviii. 35.

But more than this, there is in your sin against God not only rebellion and ingratitude, but insult. It may not, perhaps, have occurred to you that ordinarily no man sins without first having conceived some untrue and unworthy idea of God; we can hardly imagine a man so desperate and hardened in his sin as to set before himself God as He really is in all His holiness and justice, and then deliberately to defy such a Being. It is always by some misrepresentation of God that the sinner encourages himself to sin; perhaps he flatters himself that his iniquity is unnoticed, thereby denying His omniscience; or that He will not be angry, thereby making Him an unholy God; or that He will not be so strict to punish as He has threatened, thereby making him unfaithful; or that He will forgive him at the last, thereby making Him unjust. Thus you see that he who sins against God has been guilty of first making to himself an idol God whom he may offend with impunity—one who has eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hands that smite not him that goeth on still in his wicked way. And this, too, is an accusation which God Himself brings against the sinner—"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."*

It seems, then, that there is more guilt in this one small sin than at first sight appeared in it; it is not, after all, so light a matter to have sinned "only against God." But you will remind us that we have not yet heard what may be said in excuse for this sin. Admitting it to have all the guilt we say it has, still it was attended with extenuating circumstances. Let us hear, then, the excuses which you have to urge.

As this was so small a sin, you will probably say that you were not aware it was a sin at all—you never thought there could have been any harm in such a trifle. But has

* Psalm l. 21.

it ever occurred to you that this very thing that you allege in your excuse is an aggravation of your guilt? For ignorance, such as you plead, is an excuse for sin only where there is no law; where there is a law, there ignorance of that law is a sin, and a great one; it is the sin of refusing to hear God when He speaks; it is that willing ignorance of which St. Peter* accuses ungodly men in his day, who chose to be ignorant of what they might and ought to have known. To whom was it that God "swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest"? Was it not to those who "who erred in their hearts because they *had not known his ways*"? Is not this His complaint against his sinful people: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; *but Israel doth not know*, my people doth not consider"?† And if it were not so, if sins of ignorance were always guiltless, then there would be a direct bounty upon ignorance; this would be to give a revelation, and at the same time to give men the strongest inducement not to read it. In such a case it would indeed be bliss to be ignorant, and folly to be wise. We cannot, then, allow this plea of ignorance from you who are possessed of a revelation. When you say that you never thought there was any harm in what you did, you must mean you did not choose to think about it at all; you did not "know," because you would not "consider." Such want of consideration is in itself an additional sin against God. But perhaps you will say that though you knew that this thing which you did was wrong, yet that, from the force of habit, you did it unconsciously—you really were not aware at the moment of what you were doing. Now what is this but a confession that it was not your first offence, that you had committed it over and over again, until it had become your second nature to do so,

* 2 Peter iii. 5. † Isaiah i. 3.

that you had so often and so deeply defiled your garments, that one stain more attracted no notice? By your own acknowledgment you are an old offender; your fault is only the last of a long series, and its guilt is, therefore, multiplied by that of every one which preceded it. This habit of sinning, then, which you plead in your defence is a most tremendous aggravation of your guilt. There is something exceedingly awful in the very least habitual sin; it is but a drop if we consider it by itself, but it may be the last drop that makes a full cup of wrath overflow in judgment—the last sin wanting to fill up the measure of your iniquity—the last resistance offered to the Spirit of Grace that drives Him from your heart for ever.

You see, then, how vain is the attempt to palliate sin when the balance in which our transgressions are weighed is the balance of the sanctuary, where each excuse which we would set against our fault is cast into the same scale with it—for it, too, is a sin "against God."

But we have not yet done with this one sin. Let us examine it a little more closely. It is not *one*, but manifold. A moment's thought will show you that no sin can be single; it is multiplied into many sins by its attendant circumstances of time, and manner, and place. Take, for example, the sin by which Adam fell. It seems at first but one single act of disobedience; and yet how many sins did it include: there was in it infidelity, apostacy, idolatry, rebellion, covetousness, gluttony, and theft. Or, take some one of the very least of your own transgressions. Let us suppose that some trifling or foolish imagination has passed through your mind since you entered this church—that for one moment your thoughts have been busied with the cares or the pleasures of the week. That thought has been indulged in in God's house—that was sacrilege; while you were engaged in His service—that

was profanity; in preference to the thoughts of Him and of His truth which should have occupied your mind—that was idolatry. See how many sins there are in one—and that a little one! The small speck of cloud which looked at first no bigger than a man's hand has swollen, even as we contemplate it, into a great dark mass fraught with judgment. The evil thing that seemed at first but one, when questioned in the name of Christ, makes answer, "My name is legion, for we are many."

And now let us sum up all that we have discovered of guilt in this small sin which we have examined. It is the guilt, not of one, but of many sins—the guilt of wilful ignorance or habitual transgression; the guilt of a rebellion against the will, and a libel on the character of God, your Creator, your Father, your Redeemer. All this guilt you incurred when you sinned, even in the least degree, "against God." But if such be the enormity of our least transgression, what must be that of our greatest! Think what must be the guilt of sins which have been committed against both God and man—sins of malice and presumption—sins committed against knowledge and against conviction, and in despite every warning; and then, adding all this together, try to realise what it is you mean when you confess that you have sinned against God.

But so far we have been engaged in considering the guilt only of our sins; we have yet to try to number them. To do this fully is impossible: we might as well attempt to number the hairs of our head, or the sands upon the seashore, as to tell how oft we have offended against God. But we would suggest to you some thoughts which may enable you to see, not how many they are, but how far they exceed all power of calculation.

Let us remind you, then, in the first place, that there are three kinds of sin—sins, namely, of thought, word,

and deed; and each of these may be committed in two ways—by omission or by commission; and, further, that every sin of commission involves one of omission—that we can never do what we ought not to have done without having left undone what we ought to have done. And now, remembering the searching and comprehensive character of that law of which every transgression is a sin, try and form some remote idea of the number of your offences.

And first, let us consider our sins of thought. What an unfathomable mystery of iniquity lies in these words—sins of thought! What an awful power of sinning do they attribute to man! For what is thought? It is the spirit-life of man. The only idea we can have of the spirit within us is that it is something which thinks. We cannot conceive of it otherwise than as thinking; for man, thought and existence are one and the same thing; for everything that lives *moves*. It is only inanimate matter which is ever entirely at rest. Our living bodies are never perfectly motionless. The form of the sleeper, in its very stillest and deepest repose, is stirred by the heaving breath and the throbbing heart, that heave and throb ceaselessly, until they are stilled by death. The living spirit, too, can never be perfectly at rest: in its moments of deepest repose it is stirred by the breath of thought, and throbs with the pulse of feeling, which can never cease, because it never dies.

Man, then, is a being whose nature it is incessantly to think. In his waking hours his spirit is remembering, reasoning, reflecting, imagining; thought follows thought like sparks from the anvil—thick coming fancies are ever floating through it like moats in the sunbeam. Think, then, of the myriads upon myriads of sins of thought which must have been committed by the very youngest of us. All terms of comparison fail us here. The hairs

of our head, the leaves of some mighty forest, the sand of seashore, the water drops of the great deep are all things easy to number when compared with the sins of a being whose nature it is incessantly to think, and whose every thought may be a sin.

But we have not yet seen all the power man has of sinning by thought; for not only do we thus sin every instant of our lives, but in each of these instants we can commit a whole life of sin.

Thought is not measured or limited by time. Speech and act, being partly material, require a certain measure of time for their performance. There are, therefore, limits to the power of sinning by word or by deed. We cannot say more than a certain number of evil words, for instance, in a given period of time; but in the same period we can think an indefinite number of sins. For the mind of man can, in an instant, flash along infinite distances of time or space; it can crowd into one second an age—an eternity of thoughts. All the sins we have ever heard or read of—all the sins we have ever done—all sins that man can possibly commit; all these, in our mind, we can call up around us, and, as it were, by one act of the will, make them all our own.

This we can do without fear of discovery or punishment from man! Sins of word or deed are public, or may, one day, be made public; and the fear of this often restrains men from committing them. There is many a sinful word that we would speak, and many a sinful deed that we would do, *if we dared;* if we could be but sure that they would not lose us the esteem, or provoke the vengeance of our fellow men. But this wholesome fear restrains not sins of thought. The word spoken in the closet may have some unknown hearer that shall proclaim it on the housetop. The deed done in most hidden secrecy

may have some unseen witness that shall drag it into the light of day. But no human eye can pierce the hidden chamber of my heart, no human ear can hear the whisperings of my spirit with itself. There, when I have entered into that secret chamber of my inmost soul, and shut-to the door of my lips, so that no sound shall reach the outer world of men, there I can sin without restraint of fear or pity; thoughts which I would not speak in words for worlds, I can there give utterance to; deeds which I turn pale and tremble at the bare idea of committing, I can there safely do! There can I pour out in bitterest curses all the long pent fury of a malignant hatred, and revel in all the delights of vengeance, or in all the pleasures of lust. There, I can slander, and lie, and circumvent, and overreach, and steal; and then I can come forth with a smiling aspect and with calm and courteous speech, and move among my fellows—a man not only unstained with crime, but of the highest character for all social virtues; against whose reputation for integrity, and honour, and benevolence, the most envenomed calumny has never dared to breathe a word. Think, too, how often each one of these mental sins can be repeated; how often must the adulterer, and the murderer, and the thief, and the false swearer have revolved again and again the sin which he has but once actually committed; think of the evil thing first suggesting itself to him as a passing thought, flashing suddenly across his mind, and then returning again and again, and each time taking more definite shape and form, each time dwelt upon with sinful complacency, until, at last, the will wholly assents to it; and then how often must he plan and arrange for its commission, and picture it to himself as done, and so sin it in thought a thousand times before he accomplishes it in deed; and then, when it is done, how he can repeat it again and

again, going over in thought each detail of that scene of guilt that is burnt, as it were with fire, indelibly into the tablets of memory, and which ever as it rises up before him, he can gloat over, and delight and sate himself in the contemplation of. Think of this awful facility of sinning, over and over again, in thought, the deadliest and the foulest sins; and then multiply all these sins of commission by those of omission—remember that each evil and impure imagination has usurped the place of some good and holy one, and that every such usurpation is a sin. Think of all this, and then you will have some faint and remote idea of the hell of evil things that are in the thoughts of one sinful heart!

Then try to reckon up the sins of the tongue, only less in number than those of the heart. Think of the profane exclamation, the scoffing speech, the irreverent jest, the cruel slander, the half-hinted calumny, the unkind insinuation, the uncharitable misconstruction; the bitterness, and the wrath, and the malice, and the clamour of evil speaking; think of the taunt, and the reproach, and the angry retort, and the fierce recrimination; think of the deliberate falsehoods, and the half lies, and the deceitful pretences, and the suppressions of truth, and the glaring flatteries, and smooth, hollow compliments of society; think of the "foolish talking and jesting that are not convenient," the light, trifling, frivolous conversations that fill up so many of our leisure hours; think of all these evil communications that proceed out of the mouths of those who, "for every idle word they speak, must give account at the day of judgment," and add to all these, too, the sins of omission. Remember the times when you kept silence, though silence was a crime. Remember the confessions of Christ which you shrank of making; the words of warning and rebuke which you should have

spoken, and yet did not; the words of kindness and encouragement which you might have spoken, and yet would not, and so try to form an idea of all the world of iniquity there lies in the tongue, and of the myriad sins of the tongue which you must have committed.

Now add to these the sins of deed. Think not merely of those grosser deeds of shame which you may have done, but of those seemingly lighter sins which so easily escape our notice. Think of all the talents you have misused, of the time you have wasted, the health you have lost, the money you have squandered, the intellect you have misapplied, the influence you have abused. And think of the fearful list of sins of omission that came under this head,—the means of grace rejected, the table of the Lord deserted, the assembly of the Lord forsaken, the Word unstudied, the prayer unsaid, the alms withheld. Think, in one word, of all you might and ought to have done to glorify God and help your fellow men, and did not; and then add all these to the sins of word and thought, of which we have spoken, and then remember how these interact upon each other—the sinful word exciting sinful thought, and sinful thought prompting sinful deed; and these again returning into the memory, there again to increase and multiply in ever-varying combinations of evil—"deep," as it were, "calling unto deep," in this great waterflood of iniquity which drowns the soul. Then try and crowd into your mind, in one view, all these thoughts of sins which we have detailed in succession to you. Look, back, then, on your past life; see it as it really is—but a long series of these sins of thought, and word, and deed; reflect how many sins you must have forgotten, and that this forgetfulness is a sin; and how many more you were utterly unconscious of, and that this unconsciousness, too, was a sin; and then you may begin

to understand what it is you really mean when you say you have "sinned against God." And now remember, all this evil you have done in the sight of God—in the sight of the All-seeing—in the sight of Him whose eyes are on the ways of man, and seeth all his doings; not one of all your sinful thoughts but "He understandeth it afar off"; not one of all your sinful deeds but "He knoweth it altogether." The thickest shade of concealment, the darkest night of secresy, were it dark and silent as the very shadow of death, hides not the worker of iniquity from Him, to whom the "darkness and the light are both alike." Nay, when you sought that concealment—when, in shame and fear, you hid yourself from the eyes of men, that you might sin secretly—you chose Him for your sole witness; you made Him, as it were, privy to that sin; you retired from the presence of men into the sole presence of God; you sought to be alone that you might do before Him, your Maker and your Judge, what you dared not do before your fellow sinners. Be sure that He will keep that which you have entrusted to Him against "that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed." He whom you have chosen as your witness is One who "bringeth to light the hidden things of darkness." There is no sin that is done in His sight which shall not be made manifest before assembled "men and angels," unless it have been, ere then, "covered" from His view by the atoning blood of Christ.

What excuse can you hope to make in that day for your sin? It was done "in His sight"; He saw what you did and why you did it; He saw the temptation which you would plead was too strong for you, and the circumstance which you would fain prove to have been irresistible, and He knows that He laid no trial on you heavier than you might have been able to bear, for with

the temptation He had provided a way of escape; and He saw you refuse the one and yield to the other. Therefore shall you be speechless before Him: of all the pleas and excuses which you now can find for sin, not one shall serve you then when you stand before His bar to answer to this charge—"Against me, me only, hast thou sinned and done this evil in my sight!"

Thus, brethren, we have completed the picture, which we proposed to draw for you, of a "miserable sinner." We have not over-drawn or over-coloured it; there are darker hues than we have dared to use, and the light in which it can be fully seen is not of this world. But it is drawn distinctly enough to show you that its inscription is no unmeaning or exaggerated phrase; that there is guilt immeasurable and misery unutterable in that load of sin, beneath which the sinner stands speechless before the judgment seat of God! And now we ask you to compare the picture of sin as it appears in God's sight with sin as it appears in the sight, and as it is pictured in the language, of men. How do men generally speak and think of sin? There are some who boast of it. There are "miserable sinners" who have reached that last wretched stage in the sinner's progress—"the seat of the scorner," where they sit glorying in their shame, recounting all their deeds of profligacy, gloating in the recollection of those things whereof they are not yet ashamed, infecting the social atmosphere with their evil communications, their filthy jesting, their desperate profanity—monuments at once of the dreadful wickedness of man and of the patient long-suffering of God. But these are the exceptions, these are open profligates, whom moral and respectable society excommunicates. How then do morality and respectability think and speak of sin? Why—provided it offends not against the decencies and the

proprieties of life—gently, indulgently, almost respectfully; there is no lack of polite phrases by which society can cloak sins, which in their native and undisguised grossness it professes to repudiate. Adultery is gallantry, profligacy is wildness, profanity is a light way of speaking, infidelity is unsettled ideas about religion, revenge is high spirit, a cold-blooded cowardly murder is an affair of honour, drunkenness is conviviality, gluttony is a taste for the pleasures of the table, and heartless and frivolous dissipation is innocent gaiety. And then morality and respectability have favourite vices which they will introduce to you as virtues—avarice is carefulness; selfishness is prudence; deceit is politeness; wasteful luxury is hospitality; pride is becoming self-respect—until, if you would believe them, you would be persuaded that sin was almost banished from good society, and that certainly there was no such thing to be found there as a "miserable sinner." Occasionally, too, respectability will be facetious upon the vices that are not respectable. Drunkenness is amusing—men make pleasant jests upon it, they have a thousand witty phrases to describe the process by which a man passes into the condition of a brute; dexterous fraud is laughed at and half admired; profanity is pardoned for its wit; and so men make a mock of sin, and smile and jest at that which makes God frown and good men weep.

But saints, the true saints of God, how do they think and speak of sin? As he of old did, down whose eyes ran "rivers of water," * because men kept not God's law? or, as another, who told sinners, "even weeping," that they who did such things were the enemies of the cross of Christ? or do not they too often look upon it with something of the complacent indulgence, and speak of it with

* Psalm cxix. 136.

something of the polite forbearance of the worldly society around them? Are not Christians too often content with having "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," forgetting their other duty of "reproving them," of snatching, even as "brands from the burning," those whom, if sin be all they say it is, they should look upon as standing on the very brink of hell? And of our own sins, even those of which we make our "humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling on our knees," how little are we sensible of their enormity or their number! How seldom is the remembrance of them really "grievous unto us," and "the burden of them intolerable"! Of all the race of sinful men, from the open profligate to the penitent saint, how few there are who know what sin is, or who think of it as they ought!

But leaving the wicked to their open wickedness, and the moral to their morality—setting these aside as having never been taught of God their own sinfulness, and therefore utterly incapable of being made to understand it, let us ask how comes it that the saints of God are thus ignorant, and comparatively careless, on this subject of sin? One reason, doubtless, is a want of increasing sanctification. The purer and the brighter the light within us shines, the more clearly do we discern the evil things that are hidden in our hearts. The more we advance in conformity with the image of Christ, the more keenly sensible we shall be of the dissimilarity that yet remains, so that it is no paradox to say that the holier we grow, the more conscious we become of our unholiness; and, on the other hand, this consciousness of sin may safely be taken as a test of our advance in holiness. Whenever we find ourselves wanting in the one, we may be sure we have not been seeking for the other. The oil

in our lamps must have waxed low, when the light they give no longer shows us our sins.

But there is another reason, perhaps, to be found in the tone and temper of the religious world, as it is called in the present day. Every age of the Church has had its own peculiar excellences and defects. The truths which had fallen into neglect, or the practices which had fallen into disuse in one age, are insisted on in another; and in the very effort to reinstate them in their due position, they are urged, with an undue vehemence, to the exclusion, in their turn, of other equally important truths and practices, so that the Church has been seen successively insisting on different leading doctrines of the Christian faith, and exhibiting the corresponding phases of the Christian life, rather than, at any one time, setting forth all the faith in its complete analogy, and exhibiting all the Christian life in its perfect proportions. Now we cannot help thinking that the fault of our own age may be that, while seeking to give due prominence to the doctrine of justification and to maintain it against all assailants, we have somewhat neglected the kindred doctrine of sanctification; that while we have been insisting strenuously upon all that Christ has done *for* us, we have thought too little of all that, by His Holy Spirit, He is to do *in* us. We are in the habit of dwelling much—and we cannot dwell too much, in proper time and place—upon the fulness and the freeness of the Gospel; but we have, perhaps, in so doing, forgotten that the Gospel itself is but a means to an end, and that end is holiness. If the grace of God has appeared in this our day in all its fulness and freeness, it has appeared in order "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."* We speak

* Tit. ii. 12.

much—and in proper time and place we cannot speak too much—of "renouncing our own righteousness" *as a ground of acceptance;* but perhaps we have not sufficiently distinguished this from renouncing all endeavour after righteousness *as a proof of our acceptance,* and as a fruit of it. We talk much—and in proper time and place we cannot talk too much—of God's blotting out our sins and iniquities, and remembering them no more; but it may be that we have not spoken so much as we ought to have done of the necessity of our remembering what He has forgotten—of our recalling, again and again, for confession, what He will never recall for judgment.

In one word, brethren, must we not, as a body, plead guilty to the charge of having somewhat neglected the science of the Christian life in our zeal to defend against its insidious enemies the truths of the Christian faith? This, perhaps, is the reason why the practice of daily and careful self-examination has fallen into comparative disuse among us. It is to be feared that many who rejoice in their freedom from the odious slavery of detailed confession of their sins to man, neglect the duty of detailed and minute confession of their sins to God. Too many penitents content themselves with general acknowledgments of their sinfulness, while they shrink from the labour and the pain of searching out each sin, and pondering upon its guilt, and bringing it distinctly and by name to God for pardon. Such persons will never have that deep and humbling sense of their own sinfulness which they ought to have; they may have the clearest and soundest views of the corruption of human nature, they may use the strongest and most humbling general confessions of sin, and yet be utterly ignorant of the corruption of their own hearts, of the grossness of their own sins. This can only be learned by frequent self-examina-

tion, by searching resolutely and closely into all the secret recesses of that deceitful heart, which shews its deceitfulness in nothing more than in its power of hiding its own desperate wickedness; for the heart, chameleon-like, changes its aspect in the shadow of him who bends over it to examine it. He who wishes to see no evil there shall see none; and it is only he who is resolved, in spite of pain and shame, to see all the evil that is there, that shall see it. If you would be really penitent, you will cultivate and practice this most difficult duty of self-examination; you will not rest satisfied with acknowledging that you are a sinner, but you will seek to know how much and how often you have sinned. You will call up each sin, one by one, for judgment; you will not hastily dismiss it from your mind, but you will examine it, and consider all the circumstances of it, until you see all the guilt there was in it, and until you feel for it the shame and the sorrow which you ought. You will confess it, distinctly, and by name: you will say to God, not merely, "Father, I have sinned," but, "Father, I have done this evil, and this, and this, too, in thy sight; have mercy upon me, pardon me and strengthen me against these sins in time to come." So David mourned and confessed his sin; and so should we, if we would experience anything of the joy and gladness which David felt when he was assured that his sin was forgiven him; for painful as is the discipline of true penitence, they are the happiest who most frequently undergo it. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." So precious is the comfort that Christ gives the penitent that it is cheaply purchased by the pain of mourning; nay, it is the mourning which enhances the consolation. It is the night of weeping that gives its joy to the morning light of returning assurance and peace; they are the

eyes that sparkle most brightly at the sight of the cross, which have been dimmed with saddest tears at the sight of the serpent-wounds of sin. Would you prove this comfort? Would you enjoy this peace, "the very peace of God which passeth all understanding,"—the calm, deep, holy joy that springs up in the heart that is assured of forgiveness and of acceptance? Know that it is found in the heart that has been first broken and contrite! Be sure that if you would fully realize "the joy of God's salvation" and "the upholding of His free spirit" so that your tongue shall "sing aloud of His righteousness" and "shew forth His praise" in gratitude and in gladness, you must often and often have realized the greatness of your sin and the depth of your degradation; you must have, again and again, confessed to Him, not formally and carelessly, but "with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning," that you have sinned and done evil in His sight, for that you were "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin."

THE PURE IN HEART.

THE PURE IN HEART.

PREACHED AT THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH, 1854.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."—MATT. v. 8.

OF all the blessings promised by our Lord in these beatitudes, this, which he pronounces upon the pure in heart, is assuredly the greatest. The vision of God which they are promised is always set forth in Scripture as the highest blessing which He has to bestow; or, rather, it is described as the one blessing in which all others are included, and without which all others would be bestowed in vain. It is in "His presence" that we are bidden to look for the "fulness of joy,"* and banishment from His presence, we are told, is "everlasting destruction."† That they "shall see" God "as He is" is the promise which the Apostle John holds forth to those whom he would impress with all the greatness of their privilege in being called "the sons of God";‡ and, when the same Apostle describes for us the joys and glories of our Father's house, he tells us that "God is the light" of those who dwell there, and that they who bear His name in their forehead shall ever "see His face."§ Nay, when our Lord would describe the greatness and the glory even of holy angels, He tells us that "in Heaven they do always behold the face of His Father."‖ To see God has, therefore, been

* Ps. xvi. 11. † 2 Thess. i. 9. ‡ 1 John iii. 2.
§ Rev. xxii. 4, 5. ‖ Matt. xviii. 10.

the longing desire of His saints in all ages. It was the request of Moses:* it was the prayer of David;† it was the dying expectation of Job;‡ it was the sustaining hope of Paul;§ it was the glory foreseen of John.‖ All the promises of God, all the hopes and desires of His people, may be summed up in these words, "They shall see God."

But if this vision of God be the highest of all blessings, the qualification for it is the rarest of all attainments. None but "the pure in heart" shall see God, and who are they? Who can say that he is "pure in heart"? Or, rather, who is there that knows anything of himself, who does not know the impurity of his heart, and who has not mourned over the fountain of evil within him, which is ever springing up and welling forth in sinful word and deed? But whether we are conscious of it or not, we are all of us impure. There is not one who can say, "I am clean," I am free from all defilement of sin. And because it is so—because there is no perfect purity of heart now—therefore there can be now no perfect vision of God. The fulness of the blessing, as well as the fulness of the grace which qualifies for it, is reserved for Heaven. It shall not be until we are perfectly "like Him," that we "shall see Him as He is."

And yet there is a vision of God to be enjoyed on earth, as there is a degree of purity which fits us for that vision. Both are imperfect, but both are real; for we read of one who "endured, as *seeing Him* who is invisible."¶ Nay, it is made a distinguishing mark of the wicked, as contrasted with the just, that he hath *not seen God*. Again, we read of those "who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart," and who "purify themselves even as He is pure." So

* Exod. xxxiii. 18. † Ps. xlii. 2. ‡ Job xix. 26.
§ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ‖ Rev. xxi. 23. ¶ Heb. xi. 27.

that we may believe of this blessing, as of all others promised us by God, that, though its fulness is in Heaven, there is a foretaste of it upon earth, and that even here, in spite of indwelling corruption and surrounding temptation, there are those who, because they are pure in heart, do already begin to see God.

It shall be our task to-day to consider what is this purity of heart, and what is the vision of God which it procures for us, and why it is that the one is made the indispensable condition of the other.

It is hardly necessary to observe that the only vision of God which we can here enjoy is that of faith; no man, while in the flesh, "hath seen or can see" the face of God.* God reveals himself to man now, not in His essence, but in and by the display of His attributes. He exhibits not to men His glory, which they may not look upon and live, but, as He did for His servant of old, He proclaims to us His name—that is, His nature and character. Wherever His attributes are displayed, wherever there is a putting forth of His mercy, or His power, or His goodness, or His justice—wherever, in short, there is a work of God, there is a revelation of God. In creation, where His eternal power and Godhead are displayed; in His Word, wherein is revealed His wisdom; in His providence, where is displayed His never-failing goodness; in our hearts where may be traced the workings of His spirit; in His incarnate Son, in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—in all and each of these, as in so many mirrors, is to be seen the reflection of that light which in its own essence no man may approach unto. There is no one thing on which our eye can rest in which we may not see God. "He is not far from every one of us."

* John iii. 11.

But, although God be thus visible for all, yet we know that He is not seen by all. We know it as a matter of fact; for there are those who make it their boast that they see Him not. We know it as a matter of revelation that there are those who are "without God in this world." It is possible, therefore, that of two men looking upon the very same manifestation of Deity, the one may say, "I see Him," and the other, "I see Him not." The reason for this fact is simply this: that the laws of spiritual vision are, in this respect, precisely similar to those which regulate natural vision. In order that we should see any object in nature, it needs, not merely that it be itself visible, but that we have an organ of sight wherewith to see it; and that this organ be in its normal and healthy condition. The rays of light from the same object may fall upon the jaundiced eyes of the sick, or the dim eyes of age, or the keen bright eyes of vigorous youth; but how different is the effect in each case! So is it with the vision of God. The light that streams forth from His presence "lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; it falls upon us reflected in myriad rays of dazzling brightness from every object in creation; and yet it may shine in vain unless there be in us an organ fitted to receive it, and just in proportion to the health and vigour of that organ will our vision of Him be clear or dim.

Now, this organ of spiritual vision in man is the heart. "It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness";* it is in the "heart" that "God shines to give the light of the knowledge of his glory."† It is because of "the blindness of their hearts" that men are "alienated from the life of God";‡ it is on the "heart" of the unbeliever that "the vail" is said to rest.§ This

* Rom. x. 10. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‡ Eph. iv. 18. § 2 Cor. iii. 15.

is one of the elemental truths of theology—one of those axioms which we must receive and understand before we can advance a step in the science of divine things—that it is with the heart, not with the intellect, that man sees God. Of course we do not mean by this that any truth whatever can reach man's heart apart from and independently of his intellect; but we do mean that the revelation of God is addressed much more to the moral than to the intellectual powers of man. We do hold that the presence of God in the world that He has made, or in the Word that He has written, or in the Son that He has sent into the world, is not a matter of purely scientific or intellectual deduction: it is not to the intellect, with its reasoning and imaginative powers, but to the heart, the moral nature of man, with its affections, its feelings, its hopes, its fears—above all, its will—that God reveals Himself.

It is well for us that it is so; for, had this revelation of God been addressed only, or chiefly, to the intellect of man, then the great privilege of seeing him would have been confined to the few; or, at least, the highest degrees of happiness, the rarest and dearest spiritual blessings, would have been attainable only by those whose higher intellects enabled them to apprehend the nature of the Almighty. But, if it be to the heart—to the one great human heart, which is the same in all, whose utterances are as clear and as intelligible in the breast of the peasant as in that of the king—that God reveals himself, then there is an equality of spiritual privilege for all; all alike, from the least to the greatest, may arrive at the fullest, the truest knowledge of God. The child that lisps at its mother's knee its prayer to its Heavenly Father, the poor unlettered peasant whose ideas have never reached beyond the daily round of facts that make his daily life,

may have as just, nay, more just and accurate conceptions of God—may hold with a firmer grasp the mighty truths that underlie the simple confession of his faith, than the acute reasoner and the subtle metaphysician, who, meditating on the abstract ideas of omnipotence, and eternity, and spirituality, deems that he has, as it were, ascended into the very heaven of heavens, and brought God down, forgetting that God has long since descended and dwelt among men, revealing Himself not to the wise and prudent, but to babes.

But this truth, that God thus reveals Himself to our moral nature, proves not only an equality of spiritual privilege, but an equality of responsibility for all. The difference between those who see God, and those who see Him not, is seen to be, not in the original constitution of their nature (for all alike possess that heart whereby all may see God), but in the state and condition of that organ in each individual. There must be some disease, or some defect, in the moral nature of him who sees not God. In other words the difference between the believer and the unbeliever must be a moral one, and, as such, justly the subject of reward or punishment. Man is justly punished for an unbelief which is the result, not of physical inability, but of moral perversity. It is true that, in the moral darkness of his unregenerate heart, man cannot see God ; but it is also true that, for his abiding in that darkness, for his obstinate preference of it to the light of life, man is responsible. For "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

But, if it be true that it is with the heart that man sees God, then it becomes a matter of the utmost practical importance to ascertain what is that condition of the heart in which He is most clearly and fully visible, and what

are those impediments to spiritual vision which tend to make it imperfect and obscure.

The condition which is essential in order to see God, we are told in our text, is purity of heart. "The pure in heart shall see God." This word "purity" has, both in Scripture and in the ordinary language of men, two meanings, distinct though kindred. It means sometimes simplicity as opposed to adulteration: in this sense we speak of pure wine or pure gold; and in this sense, when used figuratively, it signifies freedom from the admixture of guile or deceit—*sincerity*—a word which, in its derivation, I need not remind you, is exactly identical with it. This is elsewhere called singleness of heart; and it is identified with purity, in that passage in which St. James, addressing the "double-minded," bids them "purify their hearts." *

But it also signifies freedom from defilement or pollution, as when we speak of pure water or pure white robes. In this sense it corresponds to that expression so frequently used in Scripture, "a clean heart." Both these meanings are united by our Lord in one sentence, when, speaking of those who receive the "good seed" aright, he describes them as bringing forth fruit out of "an *honest* and good *heart*." †

Let us now endeavour to ascertain why these two qualities, viz., sincerity and holiness, implied in the idea of purity, are essentially necessary to our seeing God. In the first place, sincerity of heart is necessary to seeing God at all. He who would see God must begin by earnestly and sincerely desiring to see Him. There is no mathematical demonstration of God for man. His eternal power and Godhead, though it be clearly dis-

* James iv. 8. † Luke viii. 15.

cernible from the things that are made, does not flash forth from creation in overwhelming glory, dazzling and awing the terrified senses into the confession, "God is here." Nor yet does His existence commend itself to the intellect by such clear and irrefragable links of proof as can compel such assent as it yields to the truth of science. It is, as we have seen, a revelation to our moral nature. It is an appeal, not merely to the reason, but to the affections, to the desires, and to the will of man. Our whole probation in this life consists in this, that our belief that God is can never be the mere mechanical result of the forces of external evidences upon our intellect. There is just sufficient possibility of doubt left in every case to allow men to disbelieve if they will. Man must believe, in spite of himself, what he sees with his bodily eyes, or what admits of demonstration to his intellect. But he may, if he pleases, escape from a conclusion which it needs an effort of the will to arrive at; and therefore it is that man has in this world the awful power of unbelief; he may say, if he chooses, I will not see God; he may, if he pleases, make his eyes so blind that they shall not see, and his ears so dull that they shall not hear. It is the awful law of the dispensation in which we live, that "he that is unrighteous" may, in spite of all motives to righteousness, "be unrighteous still," and "he that is filthy" may, in spite of all persuasion to holiness, "be filthy still."

This truth, that a sincere desire to believe is essential to belief in God, is too often overlooked, both by those who attack, and by those who defend our faith. The one frequently demand, and the other too often attempt to give, unanswerable demonstrations that God is. "Prove to me," says the unhappy man who makes it his miserable boast that he cannot see God, "prove to

me that there is a God, and I will believe." And his Christian antagonist sets himself to give this proof: he brings arguments *a priori* and *a posteriori;* he gathers from every source the myriad evidences that God has scattered all around us of his being, and, piling them all together, bids his opponent overthrow his proofs if he can. The infidel laughs him to scorn. He tells him that he is as far as ever from believing that there is a God; and he shows him, as he doubtless can, that, spite of all these proofs, there is still an abstract possibility that, after all, there may be no God; and the one exults, and the other desponds, because he has not found a demonstration that God is.

Surely both need to be reminded that such proof is, from the very nature of the case, impossible. God has declared that they, and they only, shall see Him who sincerely desire it. Let us then ask this man, who says he sees Him not, "How have you conducted your search? Have you begun it as you should have done, with an earnest desire that it might be successful? Have you striven and toiled, and sought with eager perseverance for all possible proofs of His existence? Was it with disappointment and distress that you slowly relinquished each one as insufficient? Was it with a grieved and terrified heart that you reluctantly came to the miserable conclusion at which you say you have arrived, that you have no God? Has this been the history of your search? Or has it—oh, speak honestly, and say—has it not been that you have set out in your search with a desire to find proofs, not that He is, but that He is not; that you have been seeking to obtain the assent of your intellect, and the support of your reason to the foregone conclusion of your heart, which secretly resolved that there should be no God? Are you not conscious of a secret unwilling-

ness to entertain the idea of a just and holy God, who rules, and will one day judge you? Have you not at least a strong interest in disproving his existence? Is it not so? Why then do you complain that you cannot see God? What right have you to expect that He shall reveal Himself to you but under those conditions under which alone He has declared that He will reveal Himself to any? You set aside those conditions, and yet you expect that you shall see Him; that is, you dare to conduct an inquiry concerning your Maker as you would not dare to conduct an inquiry concerning the very meanest of His works."

In all sciences there are certain conditions to be complied with, certain axioms to be admitted before the learner can acquire even an idea of their principles; and if, while confessing his neglect of these conditions, he should venture to question the truth of the science, he would only provoke the scorn of the wise, who would have no words to waste upon the man whose objections are based only upon his own ignorance. But not so, when man comes to inquire concerning God: there, what in another inquiry would be looked on as childish and ignorant folly is dignified by the title of philosophy and reasoning; and men hear respectfully, and ponder anxiously, arguments which should only move a smile of scorn, or a sigh of pity for him who uses them.

Surely, until the unbeliever complies with the conditions under which the truths of theology become visible, we have the same right as the professors of any other science simply to refuse him a hearing. May I not tell him who says "I cannot see God,"—"If you in your present temper and tone of mind were to tell me that you saw Him, then perhaps I might have reason to doubt the truth of this book, which tells me that

you cannot see Him. But, as it is, your inability to see God does not lessen my certainty that I see Him. Your unbelief excites in me no fear, no anxiety even, for the security of my faith. I can only look upon you as an object of sincere and heartfelt pity. I pity you, when you tell me that this fair world, which is to me a mirror that reflects the glory and the power of God, is to you a moral blank, the cheerless, necessary result of certain eternal and inexorable laws. I pity you, when you tell me that the Word of God, which is the light to my paths and the lamp to my feet, is to you no more than a useless enigma, or at the best a pleasing collection of tales and poems. I pity you, oh how I pity you, when you tell me that the Saviour I love and adore was an impostor, or a myth; but you cannot shake my faith! Nay, I claim you as one of the strongest proofs that what I believe is true. I tell you that there is not one of all those signs from heaven at which you scoff, not one of all those wonders upon earth which you disregard, that brings to me a surer token that there is a God, and that He has spoken to man, than you afford me in your very denial of His existence. I tell you, that you, in all the pride of your scepticism; as you raise your eyes to the heavens that declare His glory, and boast that you see it not; you, as you look upon the earth that He hath made in all its goodliness and beauty, and declare that you discern Him not; you, who, in spite of all the evidences that surround you, yet scoffingly ask me for proof that God is, you are to me a standing evidence of the truth of that book, which has foretold, and described, and classified you long ago as 'the fool' who 'hath said in his heart, There is no God.'"

But there is another most important application of

this truth, that sincerity of will is necesary to belief in God. If this sincerity be necessary in order to attain a knowledge of him, it is necessary also in order to retain it. The same sinful dislike of God, the same desire that He should not be, which confirms the infidel in his unbelief, may lead the merely-professing Christian into open infidelity. There are numbers of professing Christians who yield to the truths of religion a merely educational or habitual assent, but who have never made them their own by interweaving them into their daily life: their heart has no share in their belief in God. In all such hearts there must be a fearful affinity for infidelity; their wishes, their inclinations are all on the side of the atheist. It would not terrify or distress them to learn that he was right, and that there was, after all, no God. Alas! there may be many to whom this intelligence would be far from unwelcome. The man who, by long continuance in sinning against light, has seared and hardened his heart into desperate impenitence, whose only remaining sense of religion is the "fearful looking-for of judgment" to come, has a dreadful temptation to believe that there is no Judge, and shall be no judgment. He, who has no desire, and no hope of the joys that are at God's right hand, may be only too glad to believe that there is no Heaven, if at the same time he can believe there is no Hell. Such an one is in a fit frame to listen to all the doubts and all the cavils of the infidel, to give the fullest weight to the lightest objections, to resist the greatest weight of evidence, and to evade the force of the most conclusive reasoning; for in his heart he has already said, "Let there be no God."

Such an "infidel's progress" is not improbable: we believe it is by no means uncommon. "The seat of the scorner" is but one remove from the "way of sinners";

and those who habitually walk in the one are in fearful danger of one day sitting in the other. Assuredly, all who profess and call themselves Christians, and especially those whose studies must necessarily lead them into contact with the writings of unbelievers, should take heed lest by an unholy life they are not giving themselves a fearful interest upon the wrong side of the question—a strong, it may prove an irresistible, temptation some day to say in their hearts, "There *is* no God!"

But if sincerity of heart be necessary to see that God is, holiness of heart is essential in order to see *what* He is. It is not enough merely to believe that He is; we must "glorify him as God"; that is, we must know something of His nature and of His attributes as revealed in His word. Now, in order to attain to this knowledge holiness is essential; for man necessarily forms his conception of the character of God by attributing to Him those qualities which he finds in his own nature; indeed, apart from revelation, he must derive all his ideas of God from this source—he can only think of Him as a Being greater than himself, but still like himself, having the qualities he possesses, only in a higher degree. And, undoubtedly, had man remained as he was first created, in the "likeness and image of God," his ideas of God thus conceived, however faint and imperfect, would not have been erroneous so far as they went. He who was "very good" would have found in himself much that resembled, and much that was designed to resemble Him who is absolute goodness. But after man had lost the image of God, when he still looked within himself for the likeness of God, he must have found there, instead of a likeness, a hideous caricature; for in proportion as the mirror within had become

defiled and sin-stained, it must have reflected for him an impure and evil deity, until at last a foul and monstrous idol took the place of the image and likeness of the one true God. And this is exactly the progress of idolatry as described by the Apostle Paul: he tells us in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans that, when men no longer chose "to retain God in their knowledge," they "became vain in their imagination"; their foolish heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the "likeness of corruptible man." Man, who was once in the image of God, made for himself gods in his own image. The gods of the heathens were impersonations of all the qualities of their own nature; and as the evil qualities and passions of our fallen nature are stronger than the good, they naturally became the most prominent features in man's ideal of a God who was like unto himself. And fearfully does the pagan mythology testify to the impurity of the heart from which the heathen drew their ideal of a God: their deities were lust and cruelty, luxury and gluttony, skilful cunning, and savage ferocity. Every evil passion and every baser appetite took its place in their heaven, and had its altars upon earth; and the wise and the learned, and the mighty men of antiquity, bowed them down in abject and slavish worship before their own deified iniquities, as the ignorant peasant trembles in superstitious terror at the giant and cloud-formed image of himself.

And although revelation corrects the grosser errors of paganism respecting the Divine nature, still, in spite of its clearer teachings, the impure heart of man must ever form false and impure conceptions of God. For revelation speaks to us of God in terms borrowed from our own nature. It describes him as having in perfection qualities and attributes that we have in a degree. Man has

knowledge; God is omniscient. Man has power; God is almighty. Man is capable of love, or justice, or mercy; God is all love, absolute justice, perfect mercy. All His moral attributes are thus revealed to us by the names of similar qualities in ourselves; and not only His attributes, but His various relations to us are revealed in terms borrowed from similar relations among men. He is described as a Father, a Master, a Judge, a King, doubtless because these human relationships are really analogous to those which He sustains to us.

And, indeed, this is the only form in which a revelation of God is possible for man: for, surely, in so far as the nature of God is essentially different from ours, it is not conceivable by us. We feel this when we compare our ideas respecting those divine attributes which are essentially different from ours with our ideas of those which seem to resemble ours: for instance, when we compare our conception of God as Triune, or as the First Cause, existing from all eternity, with our ideas of Him as holy and true, and long-suffering and merciful. We cannot understand how God is Three yet One; the more we ponder on it, the more dark and difficult does the mystery become; there is no analogy in human nature or in human relations that can throw any light upon it. We feel that all our meditations on the subject only bring us to the edge of the cloud and thick darkness that surround his presence. We bow before it and adore. But, on the other hand, we know that we can attach a meaning, definite and clear, to the proposition "God is love"; or the promise that He will be to us a Father, and that we shall be His children.

We feel that, vast and measureless as may be the distance between the deepest human love and that Divine love that passeth knowledge, yet there is a resemblance between them that warrants us in offering Him that human

affection that can only be called forth by love. We know that, faint and imperfect as may be the analogy between our human relationship of son and parent, and our relationship to our Heavenly Father, yet there is an analogy that warrants us in saying, "We will arise and go to our Father, and say unto Him, Father, we have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and are no more worthy to be called Thy children." And thus, and thus only, as it seems to us, can man be attracted Godward, and the human affections and human desires find their true and their highest object—God. He draws us ever "with the cords of a man." He who, when He would make to man His clearest and fullest revelation of Himself, "even the express image of His person," took human flesh in the person of His Son, and dwelt among men, that they might see the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—He, in merciful condescension for our finite comprehensions, has clothed, as it were, in human form the truths that he reveals concerning Himself, and permits us, from our human and earthly relationships and feelings, to learn all that we can learn in this present state concerning Him.

But if this be the manner in which He has chosen to reveal Himself to us, if His Word does thus so constantly refer us to qualities within us, and to relationships around us, in order that we from them may learn something of God, is it not clear that the more defective these qualities are in us, and the more imperfect our conceptions of these relationships, the more defective and the more imperfect must be our ideas of God? What idea, for instance, can he have of a God of love whose nature is unloving and selfish; or of a God of mercy whose heart is pitiless and cruel? How can the deceitful and unjust and impure picture to themselves a Being who is holy, just, and

true? How dim, how distorted, how utterly unworthy must be that man's conceptions of God whose ideas of love and goodness, and truth and purity are fallen even below the standard of human excellence, who has so debased and defiled his moral nature as to be incapable of understanding or loving the better and higher natures even of his fellow-men! How can he lift up his heart to conceive of Him who is the perfection of holiness and goodness, and of purity and truth? Is it not to such an one that God himself addresses the rebuke, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself"?* Is not the God of that man, if he think of a God at all, as much an idol, as much the god of his own impure and evil and depraved imagination, as ever was the god of the heathen? Assuredly he sees not, and cannot see, the God of the Bible.

No! we may be sure that what a man's ideas of God are must always depend in a great measure on what he himself is. The God of the unholy and unjust and impure will be a very different being from the God of him who has been "renewed in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him who created him"! Unto the pure, He has Himself told us, He will show Himself pure: unto the froward, He will show Himself froward. The light that beams pure and bright from the throne of God takes yet the hue of the moral atmosphere through which it passes; and it is not until that be cleansed from the dark vapours and mists of sin that man can attain to the vision of God.

And now that we have seen how close, how inseparable is this relation between the grace of purity of heart and the blessing of beholding God, now that we have shown you that sincerity of heart is necessary to see even that God *is*, and holiness of heart to see Him *as* He is, how

* Ps. L. 21.

solemn, how deeply important is the question for each one of us, "Am I pure in heart? Am I sincere, and humbly desirous to know God, and to do His holy will? Have I yet obtained from Him that most precious of all gifts, a clean heart?"—not a heart that is cleansed from all sin, for this is not to be obtained on earth, but a heart in which is implanted that principle of holiness which loathes the impurity that must exist within it even until the last; that purity of heart which mourns for iniquity, and seeks again and again, after every transgression, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and longs for deliverance from this body of sin and death, and sighs for that place where nothing that defileth can ever enter!

This is a question to be answered by each one of us, as before the searcher of hearts. It is a question to which, if so asked, our hearts will return a true answer. Who, then, is conscious of having no desire to see God, no renewal of his heart in the image of God? Who knows that he is still fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind? We would most earnestly entreat of such an one to consider his condition as defined by our text. He cannot see God; and if he die unchanged, he never shall see God. Let not such an one deceive himself with some vague hope of the mercy of God, the secret promise of his heart that at the last God will somehow have mercy. Alas! you do not see God; your unregenerate heart is at this moment deceiving you, while it shows you a God, all mercy and compassion, and hides from you the God who is all holiness and truth. To you it may seem an easy and a natural thing for God to admit into His presence an unregenerate being, and to allow you, impure and unholy as you are, to dwell with Him, for ever. Alas! you do not see that it is not merely God's wrath, or even His justice, which will doom your banishment from His

presence: it is His holiness. It cannot be that anything that defileth can appear in the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. It is this that seems to me to give the most awful proof of the utter hopelessness of the impenitent sinner. Tell me that God is wroth with sinners: I can imagine that wrath at last appeased. Tell me that God is just: I can imagine, however erroneously, that justice at last satisfied by ages of suffering. But tell me that God is holy: I feel that there must be between His holiness and the pollution of an utterly impure being an absolute, an eternal repulsion. I feel the hopelessness of his state whose banishment must endure so long as God is pure. Be warned, then, in time. Be sure of this, that Heaven is something more than that mere alternative to Hell which it appears to be to you; it is a place of holiness as well as happiness. The joy of its holy in-dwellers is a joy which, if you refuse here, you can never know there. They see God!

But those who, spite of all their consciousness of sin and defilement, are yet also conscious that they have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and know the blessedness of seeing God, oh, how anxiously, how jealously should they watch their hearts, how earnestly seek for increasing purity of heart; for, if utter impurity of heart makes it impossible to see God, then it is also true that partial impurity makes it difficult to see Him. Never does there rise in our hearts an evil desire, a rebellious thought, a vain imagination, that it does not dim our vision of God. And not only does it make it more difficult at the moment of its presence to see Him; but it tends to impair our spiritual vision ever after. No evil thought can pass through the imagination without leaving its trace upon the memory; and long, long after it has been repented of as a sin, it may return again and again

to haunt us as a temptation : connecting itself, by some subtle law of association, perhaps with the very highest and holiest subjects, starting upon us in our most solemn meditations, intruding as a wandering thought in our most earnest prayers. Oh, who is there that has ever turned from the dead idols of his youth to serve the living God, who has not had bitter experience of this truth, that the idols once pictured upon the chambers of imagery are not so easily effaced? Even though we cover them again and again with the pictures of all holy things, again and again are we tempted or terrified by seeing the old forms peering out, and mingling grotesquely and horribly with all that is lovely and pure, and great and good ; and never, never, till the walls of this earthly tabernacle are taken down, and rebuilt again of heavenly materials, can we be entirely free from the old defilements of our early idolatry.

But, while this thought should urge us to watchfulness, so should it urge us to jealous self-examination. Whenever we find our perception of Divine things becoming dim, we may suspect that there is some latent impurity within, some lurking sin undetected, unrepented of, that is dimming our vision. And we may apply this test to every department of our spiritual life, to everything in which we may and ought to see God. We open the Book of God ; He is to be seen in every page and every line of it. Why is it that our study of it is often so profitless, that we see Him not as we were wont, perhaps, in times past to see Him? Ah! the wisdom from above is first pure ; " the mystery of the faith " is to be learned as well as " held fast " in a " pure conscience." For the study of the Word, the best preparation is a holy life. We seek God in prayer ; we find Him not. We stretch out our hands ; and He seems to regard us not. Let us remember

that, if we regard iniquity in our hearts, He will not hear us; that, if we draw near to Him, it must be with "a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." We seek God within us; we would fain trace the workings of His Spirit, those tokens of His indwelling presence that are so precious to the Christian, in whose heart the ever-blessed Trinity has taken its abode. We seek them in vain; we find no tokens of His presence, no shining of the light of His countenance, such as once made the daylight of our soul. Ah! we have grieved Him; we have caused Him to withdraw Himself; He will not return until the sin which defiles His temple be cast out and mourned over.

Let us seek, then, diligently and earnestly this best gift of God—a clean and pure heart; for we may be sure that as we grow in grace so only shall we grow in the knowledge of God; and yet, again, as our knowledge of Him increases, so shall our holiness; so that, beholding Him, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, until we, who see Him now by faith, have there the fruition of His glorious Godhead.

Blessed, then, are the pure in heart; blessed are they who now "see God," who see Him everywhere—in providence, their overruling and protecting King; in the world, their loving Father providing for all their wants, ordering all things to work together for their good; in Christ, their covenant God and their Almighty Saviour. At every step in their journey through life, at every moment, whether of sorrow or of joy, they can discern Him the cause of all. They see Him in every blessing; and it enhances each to know it comes from Him. They see Him in every trial; and they take it as a token of love, and they can say, "Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and

scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." They see Him in death; when its dark mists are hiding this world from their view, they see Heaven open, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. They shall see Him in Heaven. There we cannot, even in imagination, follow them; no words of ours can picture the deep quiet of their rest, the fulness of their joy. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" the joys of the beatific vision; but there we know that their joy is full; because there they are for ever "pure in heart," and there for ever "they see God."

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

PREACHED IN QUEBEC CHAPEL, OCTOBER 7, 1860.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."—EPHESIANS vi. 19.

THERE is something very touching in the contrast between the tone of these words and that of the preceding passage. That passage contains St. Paul's famous exhortation to the Ephesians to put on them the whole armour of God, and to fight for Him against all things evil. You are all familiar with the words—and you know what noble and spirit-stirring words they are. They read like, what in truth they are, the battle speech of a great general to his soldiers on the eve of a great conflict. How brave and how great does St. Paul appear to us, as we see him, the leader of the great army of Christ, going forth to invade the world and calmly surveying all the enemies drawn up in battle array against him, the principalities and powers, and rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness, and the wiles of the devil; and then calmly turning to his followers and saying: "Finally brethren—as the result of all that I have seen and know of the power of our enemies—finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Stand in the evil day, and having done all—stand!"

And now, after those words of lofty courage and unshrinking faith, what follow? Words of fear and doubt!

—words that express a dread that he who has been exhorting others to stand fast should not stand fast himself. "Pray," he says, "for all saints, with all supplication, and *for me* that utterance may be given me—that I may open my mouth *boldly*." He feared, then, that he might not be bold enough, that his courage might fail him in the hour of trial; and he asks their prayers that this may not be! Is it not very touching, this cry for help from the strong man, who is helping others, this confession of weakness and fear from the brave man who has just been speaking of quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked one?

But these words are not only very affecting; they are very important and instructive. If it were not for these and others like these, the writings and the life of St. Paul would lose half their value for us. If we had them not we should think of the Apostle as a man removed by his greatness far beyond our imitation. He would be for us the great missionary, the inspired teacher, the worker of miracles, the ruler of the Churches: but we should never think of making him our example, and of encouraging ourselves in our trials by remembering his courage and his success. But when that great Apostle reveals to us in such passages as these his inner life and feelings; when we look, not upon the Apostle, but on the man, we see a man of like passions with ourselves—tried by the same doubts, shaken by the same terrors, assailed by the same temptations, craving the same sympathy, sustained by the same grace as ourselves. Then we can thank God and take courage. The same grace that sufficed for him, will suffice for us. The same God that supplied his need, will supply ours, and thus these passages in the letters of St. Paul serve in the New Testament the same purpose that the Psalms of David

do in the Old—they reveal to us the *heart* of a man of God—tried, tempted, suffering, but never despairing, that we through patience and comfort of such scriptures might have hope.

But although such passages of Scripture are very valuable, there is one obvious caution to be observed in using them. We must always, before we appropriate them to ourselves, see that our case is similar to that of the speaker when he spake them; for only so far as it is have we any right to apply them to ourselves.

And it may, perhaps, have occurred to you that this is just the objection which lies against the use that I propose to make of this text, for I have no doubt that you have anticipated what that use must be. You must be expecting that I am about to apply these words to my own case to-day—to entreat you, on this my first appearance among you, for your prayers "that utterance may be given me." And you may have thought as you heard me read these verses: Surely, whatever words of St. Paul might be suitable to a modern preacher, these are not so, for what risk does the preacher in these days run from preaching the Gospel that he should need to pray for boldness! The offence of the Cross has ceased long ago. The Gospel is popular, it is fashionable. It is a reproach and a grave accusation against a minister to say he does not preach the Gospel. Not to preach it may require boldness; surely it needs none to preach it!

So it seems at first; and yet I believe that in no respect does the case of the preacher in our own day more resemble that of St. Paul than in this very thing—that he needs *boldness*. And no greater need can a pastor have of his people's prayers than for this, that utterance may be given him to open his mouth boldly; to speak the mystery as he ought to speak.

Let me endeavour to show you this, that I may have your prayers.

In the first place let us see why it was that St. Paul needed courage to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The reason most commonly given is that the Apostles preached a *crucified* Saviour; that it was the fact that Jesus was put to death as a criminal that made the first preacher ashamed and afraid to preach Him. But this is a great mistake. What sect was ever ashamed of its martyrs? Has it ever hindered the growth of any sect that its founders have been unjustly put to death; and was not the injustice of Christ's death well known at the time of it? Did not His judge declare, again and again, that he found no fault in Him? Did not His betrayer commit suicide from grief at having betrayed innocent blood? Did not the people who had clamoured for His death publicly confess their sin, and ask His disciples what they should do to be saved from the guilt of it? And if there could have been any shame in such a death as this, was there not the wonder and the glory of the resurrection to set against it? Surely it is impossible that the Apostles could ever have been ashamed or afraid to speak of the Cross of Christ.

And in fact we know that they never were. They speak of it, preach of it, write of it, as men who gloried in it, not as men who sought to conceal it.

But further, so far from the offence of the Cross consisting in the fact that Christ was crucified, St. Paul distinctly tells us that it was not. "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the Cross ceased." Now here we are told that if circumcision were preached, offence ceased. But inasmuch as the fact that Christ was crucified remained just the same whether circumcision

were preached or not, it is clear that this fact could not have been the offence of the Cross. We must look for that offence not in the literal, material cross, but in the doctrine of the Cross. It was not the cross but something in the mystery of the Gospel of the Cross that gave offence to men. What was this?

What is the Gospel St. Paul had to preach? Let me proclaim it at the commencement of my ministry. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Where lies the mystery here? We turn to Eph. iii., 4, 5, 6. The mystery was that *Gentiles* should be heirs. The mystery lay in the first clause—that God loved the World; not one nation—not Jews only, but Gentiles too. All men everywhere have equal share in the Father's love, and an equal right to the Father's blessing.

This was a mystery to the Jews—a strange new doctrine that they had never heard of before. They had always held that Judæa was God's only Kingdom and the Jews His only people; that the Gentiles could be saved only by becoming Jews, by being circumcised and keeping the law. Of course, as this belief was very flattering to their pride and self-love, so the new doctrine that Gentiles could be saved as Gentiles; that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed anything; that men should no longer worship the Father in Jerusalem any more than on Mount Gerizim; that neither Moses nor the law, but the Cross of Christ should save men, and that this should save all alike, —this must have been most offensive. It was nothing less than treason against their laws and customs, their holy place and their very national existence. And more than all it was an affront to their understanding to be told that they had quite mistaken their own scriptures, and that

those really taught in all their types and prophecies that God's Kingdom was to be for all races, and that Moses should give place to Christ.

Here then was the real offence of the Cross to the Jew. It was its catholicity. It was not that Jesus was crucified, but that He was crucified for all men—not that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah, but that He was not their Messiah *alone*, that constituted their real cause for hatred of the Gospel. And if St. Paul had only consented not to preach this mystery of the Gospel, if he had only preached, as he says, circumcision—that is a Jewish Gospel and for Jews only, he might have preached what else he pleased; they would not have been offended. Nay, we know that they did hear him patiently enough when he preached Jesus of Nazareth as his risen Lord, but when he told them that He would send him far hence among the Gentiles, they cried out, "Away with him—it is not fit that he should live."

And it was because St. Paul never would preach this Jewish Gospel—because he would not give place, no, not for an hour to these false teachers that did preach it—because he insisted on preaching the "grace of God appearing to *all men*"—a Gospel not for a race or a nation, but for the world,—it was for this reason that he needed boldness to preach that Gospel to the Jews. For when he so preached the Gospel, he was provoking the deadliest of all hatreds, and rousing the fiercest of all passions in those he preached to. He was provoking the hatred of sectarianism. He was rousing the party spirit of his day.

It was the sectarianism of the Jew. It was that deadliest form of selfishness that shuts up men within the narrow limits of their race, or their party, or their sect, and bids them keep all love and sympathy and justice for

those who dwell with them,—nay, which bids men ever seek to bring the law of God Himself within the little circle of their own party hatreds or affections, insisting ever on their own wretched shibboleths as the passport not only to men's favour but to God's. It was this spirit that made the Jews so angry at the thought of God's Kingdom being wider than Judæa, and God's love large enough for all mankind. Whoever knows how fierce and bitter, how obstinate, and unjust, and cruel this spirit can be, knows how much need St. Paul had to preach to Jewish hearers this truth, this mystery of the Gospel—God loves the world.

But if this was the offence of the Cross to the Jew, we might expect that St. Paul would have had no difficulty in preaching this Gospel to Gentiles. We might suppose that what offended the Jew would have been just what would have pleased the Gentile—namely, the idea of a Kingdom of God for all men. So it would if this were all the Gospel. But it is not. The Gospel which declares that God loves all the world, and that He has sent His Son to save all, says that men must believe. That is to say, it proclaims a Kingdom for all men. But that Kingdom has but one King and one law for all men; whoever enters it must give up all other gods and other lords, and believe in and worship one only. Whosoever will may enter, Jew or Gentile. But Jew or Gentile must enter as a *believer*. He that believes, and he alone, shall be saved.

Now here was a new doctrine for the Gentiles, quite as mysterious to them as their admission to the Kingdom had been to the Jew. The Gentile world had no idea of one only true God who allowed of no worship but His own. They had gods many and lords many, and they held that the gods of one nation were quite as truly gods as those of any other nation, and they used to borrow and

exchange their deities freely. Now if the Apostles had only come to proclaim a new god, if they had only asked that Christianity should take its place among other faiths, and Christ take His place among other gods, the Gentiles would not have been in the least offended—they might have laughed at them for babblers—they would not have been angry.

But the Apostles could not do this; the Kingdom they came to set up was an universal Kingdom. Christ was not to rule beside the heathen gods, but He was to take their place; their temples were to vanish and their idols to be utterly abolished before Him. The Christian teacher might not say to the heathen, "Your religion is true for you and mine is true for me;" he was bound to say, "Mine is the truth, yours a perversion of the truth. Whatever truth, whatever goodness there may be in yours is only borrowed from mine, and I am come to claim it. Give up all else. Give up whatever in your worship opposes itself to this new truth. Give up in your philosophy whatever denies it. Submit yourself to the mystery of the Gospel of Christ. Do this or perish everlastingly." This was an offensive and unintelligible mystery. This intolerant faith that allowed of none other, which claimed to be not only true but *the* truth; this newer, illiterate, unphilosophical creed,—this was foolishness.

Thus you see the mystery of the Gospel was offensive both to Jew and Gentile. It offended the sectarianism of the one—the latitudinarianism of the other. For the one, it was too broad, for it would admit all men, for the other too narrow, for it would not admit all creeds. The Jew was amazed and angry to hear that "God loved the world." The Gentile amazed and angry to hear that only he who believed should be saved. The Jew could not understand how a Gentile could be holy. The Gentile

could not understand why he must be holy. The universality of the Gospel was the stumbling block to the one. The supremacy of the Gospel was foolishness to the other. To both it was a mystery. To both it needed courage to preach it.

Brethren, the Gospel St. Paul preached is the everlasting Gospel, the unchangeable; it is now what it was then. It proclaims now, as then, these two distinct characteristics. It declares first, all men *may* be saved. Secondly, all men *must* believe. It opposes itself therefore, now as ever, to the sectarianism that limits the love of God, and to the infidelity that denies the truth of God.

Brethren, the human nature on which the Gospel is designed to act is the same now as then, unchanged in all its deeper currents, however its surface may be changed; and under modern guise we see old forms of opposition to Christ's Gospel.

Is sectarianism extinct among us? Have we none of that old Jewish leaven, which would fain limit the Kingdom of God within the straitest limits of some little territory or Church, or school, or sect, and which denies or doubts the salvation of all who lie beyond these limits; which makes its little shibboleth the test of truth and the condition of salvation; which says of every sect save its own, "Can any good come out of that?" and proclaims that men must worship on its Zion or Gerizim; which insists upon the Gospel being preached in its own dialect in all the strictest turns of its set phrases, denouncing the least deviation from it as not preaching the Gospel? And if this spirit is working among us still—and who can deny that it is at work as powerfully as ever it was in the days of St. Paul?—the preacher will need boldness now as much as then who resolves to preach, not the Gospel of a party or a sect, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ as he learnt it

from Him,—resolves to brave, not prejudices and the opposition of other parties and other schools, but of his own, if needs be,—nay, who feels that if he is faithful it is just those prejudices that he most needs to guard against himself and to warn his hearers of,—who feels that it is a poor and a cheap courage to be brave in discussing the errors of others, but that the true courage and the hardest exercise of it is in opposing those of his own school, or his own hearers.

Yes, brethren, in the midst of all our contending schools and sects, he who would be a faithful preacher of the Gospel of Christ has need to pray that he may seek only the triumphs of that Gospel, regardless of what may be the fate of any party, or of all parties; has need to pray "that utterance may be given."

But if the sectarian spirit of the Jew is still rife among us, have we nothing to fear from the latitudinarian spirit of the Gentile? Has not the reaction against sectarian bitterness brought about a wish to include all sects and opinions in the Church? Are there not those among us who look upon all creeds as mere matter of opinion, representing different temperaments and phases of mind, and nothing more,—who say that it matters little what a man holds, providing only he be honest and earnest in holding it; that all men are travelling to the same Heaven though by different roads, and that for one man to offer to guide or set right another, or to warn him that his road may lead to destruction, is the extreme of illiberality and of bigotry; that to insist upon the necessity of believing our revealed truth is the height of intolerance; that a Bible is merely a superfluity, and a missionary an impertinence, for every man's conscience is his own, and his sufficient guide—or, at least, that however it may mislead him, he cannot be held responsible for following it,

and that in the end all will come right, for that God is too merciful to inflict eternal punishment on any.

And does the preacher of the Gospel need no courage to encounter this spirit of false charity and real infidelity: to tell the liberal man of the world, the unbelieving philosopher, who would reason away all religion into an undefined emotion, and all belief into a mere matter of opinion, that there is such a thing as truth,—revealed, eternal, necessary truth—truth that men must believe if they would be saved and which if they will not believe they must be damned?—to proclaim, in despite of every accusation of intolerance and bigotry and superstition, that wide as God's Kingdom is, it is still a Kingdom, and the Lord God is its awful and righteous King, the Ruler of men, as well as their Father; a Kingdom with its *laws*, and its judgments, and its punishments; a Kingdom that promises Heaven and that threatens Hell?

My brethren, does it not need wisdom and courage to resist, at once, both these extremes; to oppose the fulness of the Gospel to the narrowness of the sectarian; to oppose the truth of the Gospel to the unbelief of the sceptic; to tell the one that the Kingdom of God is far wider than he thinks it—to tell the other that it has its limits nevertheless: to insist at one and the same time, that it is wide as the world that God would save, and yet that its entrance is narrow as the truth that God has revealed; to preach at once a Kingdom which is catholic and a Church which is holy and Apostolic; to boldly utter the great twofold mystery—all men may be saved—all men must believe?

This was what St. Paul did. It is what every preacher must do who would be found faithful. This is the need for prayer that utterance may be given him.

And the preacher needs your prayers because of the

very subtle forms in which the temptation to unfaithfulness may beset him.

It comes, in the first place, in its lowest and most obvious form, as a merely selfish fear of consequences to himself—a fear not, of course, of the loss of life or liberty as in St. Paul's case, but a fear of the loss of much that makes life desirable, the loss of influence, and popularity, of esteem and regard, the fear of injury to worldly prosperity and advancement. I know that the minister of Christ ought to be superior to all such considerations. But is he always so—are you always so? Do you never find yourselves weighing the question, What will be the consequences to me if I do this or that? Do you never find yourself tempted to weigh this world against the next and to give it the preference? If you do so you can understand that he may be tempted too. You can understand how much need he has to pray each time he sits down to prepare a sermon, or stands up to preach it, Oh God, deliver me from all fear of man! Oh, lift me in the power of Thy spirit above this lower world and its interests! Help me to forget all consequences, save one, the woe that is upon me if I preach not the Gospel! Help me to think of no judgment to be pronounced on me but the judgment in that day when I must give an account of the souls to whom I preach! Oh, give me in the thought of that dread hour *courage* to preach boldly as I ought to speak!

But this is the temptation in its lowest and coarsest form. Here the tempter is seen in his own shape undisguised—and it only needs the effort to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and he is gone. But there is another form of this temptation in which he appears disguised as an angel of light—when he tempts us with fear of consequences, not to ourselves, but to the cause of the Gospel; when he suggests to us to win acceptance not for ourselves,

but for our message by adapting it to the prejudices of our hearers; when he whispers: "There are so many truths in this Gospel of great importance that you might induce such and such a hearer to listen to, if you would only avoid rousing his antagonism by preaching this *one truth;* keep it back, practise some little reserve in preaching this, and when he receives the rest he will come at last to receive this too." How often must St. Paul have felt this temptation when, preaching to some listening crowd of Jewish hearers, he saw them gradually yielding to the force of his argument from Scripture that Jesus was the Messiah—just on the point of saying, "What shall we do to be saved?" and knew that the next sentence that he spoke, when he should tell them of this *mystery of the Gospel,*—that Christ died for all, would undo all that he had done and close their ears against him in anger: or when, standing on Mars' Hill or disputing in the halls, as he was gently introducing to the worshippers of the Unknown God the name of Him whom they ignorantly worshipped, carrying them with him from the truths of natural religion to the truth of revealed religion, he knew that the instant he spoke of the supernatural truths to be *believed,* and believed on peril of destruction, they would close their ears in scorn and derision and laughter. What a temptation not to say just those words—to soften them —to make his Gospel as Jewish as he could or as philosophical and heathen as he could; to be not quite, not altogether, only *almost* a *Christian* teacher! And how often must the teacher who earnestly desires the success of the Gospel feel this temptation now; how often tempted to adapt and accommodate his message to the prevailing tone of religion or philosophy, to borrow a few of its phrases, to give his words something of its hue and colour, that he may win an easier admittance for the rest.

And yet it is a temptation to a grievous sin,—to distrust of the power of God's Word, a doubt of the wisdom of Him who spake it, to forgetfulness that he is only a steward and required to be faithful—only an ambassador and bound to speak his message word for word. Well, then, may he who has that message to deliver pray that he may speak it as he ought to speak, omitting, dispensing, altering, adding nothing!

And there is yet one other form of this temptation,—subtlest and deadliest of them all—when the preacher of the Gospel is tempted, by the power and the plausibility of the system he assails, to doubt for an instant whether it may not be true and his mistaken, or to doubt whether his alone is true. Such a temptation the Apostles may have felt in the presence of all the stately splendour of the Temple with all its religious and awful claims upon their reverence as they proclaimed that it must pass away; or when encountering the venerable systems of philosophy—the Greek masters of thought—they proclaimed, Where is the wisdom of this world? And such the teacher may feel now, when, as he encounters each form of error, doubt, denial, and perversion in those whom it is his duty to assist, he feels the doubt entering his own soul—sees with horror some symptom in himself of the disease, which as a physician he is studying—finds himself asking, Is this true? Are we right after all? Am I the preacher of *the* truth and are all these wise and learned men wrong? Oh, when he feels this—when he feels that only by regaining his lost faith can he regain his lost courage, only by once more digging down to foundations and building up again will he be able to say, I *believed*, therefore have I spoken,—never has he more need to pray, with all that earnest wrestling of the soul that dares not cease until it gains its coveted blessing: "Oh

God, give me boldness that I may speak the mystery as I ought to speak, boldly, with unwavering heart and unfaltering speech, as becomes one who is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

Brethren, if such be the temptations that beset the messenger of the Gospel, if these be the fears and doubts that must ever haunt and waylay him as he goes to and fro among his people to speak it—has he not need of the especial prayers of his people? Has he not, with less of danger, perhaps, but not less of difficulty, and with how much less of grace and faith than St. Paul, to say, "Pray for all saints, but pray especially *for me*"?

And remember, it is not only, it is not chiefly for his own sake that the pastor needs his people's prayers; it is far more for their sakes. It is they who must profit by every grace bestowed on him, and it is they who must suffer for every grace he loses or neglects. No prayer of yours for him does not return into your bosom sevenfold. If those prayers have visited him in hours of difficulty and depression, doubt and fear, in the form of sudden strength sustaining, nerving him afresh, as he was all but failing; then, in his deeper knowledge, and clearer thought, and higher aims, and wiser speech, and holier life, you receive a rich return. Not for himself, then, but for those to whom he ministers, may the pastor ask their prayers for him "that utterance may be given him" of God.

Brethren and dear friends, let me ask you, Have you this day thought of this claim, this need of your pastor for your prayers? Among the crowd I see here there must have been many kinds of listeners, curious, critical, kind, earnest, but how many prayerful?—recognising the law that underlies our relation; that ministry, like all gifts, may be good or evil, a blessing or a curse,

according as it is sanctified by prayer; that if errors of the people are caused by ministerial unfaithfulness, ministerial unfaithfulness is caused by prayerless indifference. The people should help by prayers that their ministers may help by words and works.

Brethren, if any word I have said has helped you to remember the awful responsibilities of that day when preacher and hearer shall stand before the judgment seat of God, then, in the present sense of these most awful duties and responsibilities, remember our privilege and duty of prayer—prayer from him who now stands for the first time your pastor, that the seed sown in your hearts may bring forth the fruit of everlasting life; prayer from you, "that utterance may be given him."

THE EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL.

THE EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. EDMUND'S, NORTHAMPTON, MARCH 26TH, 1871.*

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."—REVELATIONS xxii., 11.

THESE are very startling and very awful words, very startling for what they seem to say, very awful for what they really do say—startling for what they seem to say, because the words read at first almost like a permission to sin—"He that is unjust let him be unjust still, he that is filthy let him be filthy still," as if it were a matter of indifference to Him who uttered these words whether men continued in their unrighteousness and in their filthiness. And yet we know that, whatever the words mean, they cannot mean this. He who spoke them to His angel was He who came to save men from their sins; who came to die that the unjust might not be unjust still, and that the filthy might not be filthy still. This cannot be the meaning of the words. What is it, then? There are some who suppose that these words are a prophecy of the final utterance of judgment of Christ from

*[The following two sermons, which are simple transcripts of the shorthand writer's notes, were preached on the same day at a Lenten Mission in Northampton. The Bishop also preached a sermon to the inmates of the Union Workhouse on the same day, which has been published by Messrs. Taylor and Son, Northampton; as, however, no shorthand notes were taken and the sermon as printed does not contain, or purport to contain, the exact words of the preacher, I have not included it in this volume.—ED.]

the judgment-seat; that last word that shall seal up the eternal destiny of the righteous and of the unrighteous. But this is not really so. If you look at the verses preceding you will see that these words evidently refer to the present dispensation, that in which we are now living. The fifth verse of this chapter closes St. John's marvellous vision of the future. All that he has been saying of time and of coming eternity ends thus—"And there shall be no more night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." With that prophecy of the eternal vision of God and of the blessed reign of His people ends the vision of the future. Then mark what follows—"These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done"—what is to be done in the meanwhile before the establishment of this reign of peace. Then, after St. John, in error, has worshipped the angel, and been rebuked, this is added to the words, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Let the prophecy of this book be open in the hands of men now "for the time is at hand." And while this unsealed book is in the hands of men, while this time is coming, "he that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still . . . . and behold I come quickly." Between the time, then, of the utterance of those words and the yet distant future of their fulfilment —between the time when Christ said, "Let the unjust be unjust still," and the time when He will come to judge the unjust, this is the law under which we are living. These are the things that are being done, that are being accomplished from then until now, and shall be from now until the day of judgment.

The words, then, are very awful ones because they describe for us the operation of the law, the universal law of that kingdom of Christ of which we are members, and under which we are living. The law is this—Let men have the power of choosing whether they will be, and remain, unjust and vile, or whether they will be, and remain, righteous and holy. Let men understand that, during the interval between the first and the second coming of Christ, if any man wills to be perseveringly, and unto the end, a sinful man, he may be so. There shall be nothing to hinder. It shall not be impossible for any man to persevere in his iniquity until the end of his days. And, on the other hand, if any man wills to be righteous, it shall be possible for him. There shall be no impossibility in the righteous man continuing righteous to the end, all his days. But there is a choice for both, and that choice will not be over-ruled. No man shall be compelled to be righteous; no man shall be compelled to be sinful. "He that is unjust, let him be," if he wills it—he shall be, if he wills it—unjust to the end. "He that is," and will be, "righteous, let him be," if he wills it—he shall be, if he wills it—righteous unto the end.

I ask you then, brethren, to mark the deep and awful significance of these words which reveal to us the nature of the law that governs us in this dispensation, and tell us that this great law of Christ's Kingdom is not self-acting, does not act, that is to say, independently of the choice of those who are subject to it. The law of gravitation, for instance, acts, as it were, inevitably and mechanically, whether we choose it or not. The vital laws of our body act in spite of us and independently of us. The laws of society do so too. But as to the written law of God, addressed to our consciences, it depends upon us whether it shall be

fulfilled or not. That law does not, like other laws, inflict its penalties at once. Break any other of God's laws, the laws that bid you be sober, bid you be chaste, bid you be temperate, bid you be economical—I am speaking of the ordinary law of nature—and assuredly the penalty will immediately follow. But break this higher law, and there follows no instant penalty. No instant judgment comes to smite the sinner; no lightning flashes from heaven on the guilty soul, nor does the earth open, as it did of old, to swallow up the aggressors quickly. They are not in trouble as other men. They encourage themselves in their sin, gather up their wealth and substance and live easy, peaceful, respectable and quiet lives. "He that is unjust let him be"—he may be if he please, for he shall find nothing in the present dispensation to hinder him—"let him be unjust still." This is a very awful thing when we couple it with that other word, "Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me." It gives us an idea of restrained omnipotence, of postponed judgment, of justice waiting in stern and passionless repose unto the end; of the sinner going on, day after day, casting mite after mite into the treasury of God's wrath, heaping up, by his daily sin, a weight of judgment that is at last to fall upon him. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still." It is a very awful thing to think of this postponed judgment, of this expectant and quiescent and patient law, that waits for its prey at the end of days. And it is still more awful when we think, not merely of the law that is broken, but of the revelation that is possessed: for, mark the words—"He said unto me, Seal not the sayings of this prophecy"—this prophecy of the revelation, and this book which it closes, this book the whole of which is God's prophecy—seal it not, let it lie open in the hands of men, with its

warnings of judgment, with all its revelations of mercy, with all its invitations to repentance, with all that is awful, with all that is blessed and winning in it, with its visions of judgment, and the shrieking crowd that cry to be saved from the wrath of the Lamb; yet with its visions of the heaven of delight, and the peaceful streams, and the river that floweth out of the throne of God and the Lamb, and the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and the blessed city with its streets and gates of gold, that city within which shall never be shed a tear, that city of eternal peace and rest; with all that is in it to move, to stir and to terrify, with all that is in it to attract and win love. Let this book lie open in the hands of men. Let it lie on their tables, in their churches, in their cities, their counting-rooms and railway-stations; let the texts culled from it hang in broadsheets before their eyes. Let men go where they will see the Bible, hear the Bible; let everything that can stir their souls be ever before them, yet let it have no power of itself to win them to God. Let there be no magical power in the words of this prophecy to turn men back from sin to righteousness. Let men read these words of warning, or of blessing, with the terrible power within them of shutting their eyes to their visions of beauty and of blessing. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still." This is a very awful thing but it is a very real thing. It is the very law under which we are living. I say it is a very awful thing that this unsealed book, this open Bible—"the open Bible," as we phrase it—should add, terribly add, to the judgment and condemnation of those who read it and neglect it; that every word of it should be one of the many stripes, as it were, that should be visited on those who know their Master's will and do it not. This is the law nevertheless.

Before I pass on to consider the law I want you to consider how universal a law it is, after all. It might be said, it sometimes is said, If this be the law, if it be a fact that greater privilege brings greater responsibility and heavier judgment; if it be a fact that since Christ has come into the world those who know of Christ will suffer a heavier condemnation if they reject Him, would it not have been better if Christ had not come at all? Would it not have been better if we had never known these things? Yes; He said so Himself once. He said of some that it would have been better for them if they had never been born. And yet they were born. He said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." And yet they were done. Again He said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." And yet He did come into the world. It is so of all God's gifts. It may be said of every one of them, they bring larger powers, but with them they bring larger responsibilities. Health is a gift from God, and the strong man in the pride of his health may commit the sins of health, that sickness, with a feeble and enervated body, would have kept him from. Yet you would not say it were better that no one had health. Knowledge is a gift from God, and, in the strong impiety of his intellect, a man's mind may sin against his God, as the mind of some humbler and less gifted creature could not; and yet you would not say it were better that there should be no knowledge. Wealth is a gift of God, and because men, in greedy gathering, or wicked or avaricious hoarding, or sinful spending of it, may sin against God, yet you would not say it were better they

should have no wealth. And just in the same way, the health and wealth of the Gospel, with its blessings and privileges, even its eternity of glory, are a vast privilege from God : but with the privilege must come the responsibility. We cannot have, whether in this life and things temporal, or in the kingdom of God and things spiritual, we cannot have larger blessings, larger privilege, without larger danger and heavier responsibility. This, then, is the law, the law under which we are living—the terrible, the awful law of the kingdom of grace.

Now I want you, who during the past week have been realizing something of the fulness and the reality of this good, as it has been brought before you by the preachers in this mission, to go a step further with me. I ask you to consider at once the danger and the blessedness—the possibilities of deeper miseries and the possibilities of higher bliss—that you have every one incurred since this special mission for the preaching of Christ. Consider that the law of the Gospel is this, that a man must be—he cannot choose about it—he must be the better or the worse every time that he hears that Gospel. He must be either confirmed in his unrighteousness and his impurity, or confirmed in his righteousness, or at least in his desire to be righteous and holy. Now I ask you to consider what an awful power of self-hardening and self-destruction a man has who lives within the familiar sound of the Gospel. The Gospel is a more dangerous thing for men to hear than the older law—far more so, for this reason that it more fully reveals God : so that he who sins under it sins against deeper conviction, sins against fuller knowledge ; sins, not against the far-off and half-known Judge or ruler of the older dispensation, but sins against a present Father, sins against Him who has revealed Himself, as a loving and merciful Father, sins against

Him who has sent His son to save His people from their sins. There is greater power of dishonouring God, there is greater power of offending Christ, there is greater power of grieving the Holy Spirit of God in the Gospel dispensation in a Christian country than there can be elsewhere.

Remember, you cannot choose about this. You cannot, if you would, have the ignorance of the heathen, and with his ignorance his fewer stripes. You must have, we must have, a larger light and a clearer knowledge of the Christian life, and with it the peril of this heavier chastisement. The Gospel hardens. Have you ever thought of this, brethren? The Gospel of Christ hardens the soul of that man who will not receive it, hardens infinitely more than did the law only. How does it do so?

The Gospel hardens, in the first place, by the mere fact that it announces the postponement of judgment, "Let it alone this year also." We listen to that word, and somehow it sounds clearer and louder in our ears than that preceding it—"Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" We think of judgment postponed, we think of the mercy of Christ which intervenes between us and the remoter judgment, and while we refuse to perceive the frownings of the Heavenly judgment; while we still continue bearing no fruit in the vineyard, we forget the danger of the plant in the vineyard, for we hear but the words, "Let it alone this year," and forget that it is but for a season, and a limited season; that the Gospel suspends, fences off from us, the exercise of coming judgment, and that we are spared, not that we may be saved in our fruitlessness, but that we may have given us time for bearing fruit.

The Gospel hardens, in the next place, by its revelation of mercy. The Gospel does, indeed, tell you fully of the

infinite mercy of God—the free mercy that we may have for the asking—and just for that reason the very familiarity of it breeds contempt. Men are for ever talking of the blood of Christ and the mercy of Christ; are ever saying, "God is merciful; I shall do very well at the end—Christ died for sinners; it will all be well, because I know that the merciful Saviour will be pitiful." And so a man goes on, day after day, sinning against His mercies, rejecting his Saviour, bidding Him get out of his house and presence, and yet dreaming that somehow or other, at the end, at the last moment, his Saviour will come back to him; and he who has spent all his life in keeping away from Christ and keeping Christ away from him, expects to spend all the next life with Christ and with God. He whose whole life has been a name for forgetfulness of God, dreams of eternity in that place where God is the very light of it. Men are for ever saying "God is merciful; God is merciful!" and they forget that God's mercy is shown, not in promising pardon to the finally impenitent, but in devising, out of the resources of His wisdom, out of the might of His omnipotence, a means for that which would otherwise have been impossible—the escape of the sinner from his sin—and that the mercy of God has been shown, not in making no escape necessary, but in devising a way of escape. And yet men sin on and on and on, and then promise themselves that at the last, when they come to die, in the hurry, the excitement, the astonishment and misery of a death-bed, they will do, what in the better moments of their lives they never did, turn to God.

Again, the Gospel hardens by the familiarity it gives men with the doctrines of grace and the offers of mercy. These words about God's mercy and Christ's blood and full and free forgiveness, and the whole scheme of salvation and the doctrines of grace as they

are called, how familiar they are to men's minds! You know as I am preaching to you "there is nothing new he can say to us." There is nothing I can tell about the doctrines of grace that you do not know. Have you ever thought that it is an awful fact that they are so familiar, that there is nothing in them startling or striking? You have heard them over and over again till you have become positively indifferent; many of you, perhaps, from the very familiarity of the words. The cross of Christ is so familiar a sight in the eyes of Christendom that it has become a part of the habitual landscape which they see, scarce consciously, as that which wakes no longer feelings of love and care, and they are quite used to it. "I am sick to death," said one in a place where Gospel privileges were many, "I am sick to death of hearing that Christ died for sinners." That was an honest utterance of a thought that has been in many a heart—the weariness of the Gospel, the craving for novelty, the desire for excitement; and the very familiarity with these facts of the Gospel is very dangerous indeed. Men have a power of thus hardening themselves in their sins. The very medicine that should heal a broken heart and salve a wounded conscience is used as an anodyne to prevent their feeling anything. And so the Gospel hardens; and of all hardening that is the most fearful. The very heat of the Gospel sun burns into vitrified hardness the clay with which it comes in contact. There is no hardening so hard as the Gospel hardening. There is no heart so hard as the heart upon which has fallen, it may be for three-score years, and fallen in vain, the rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Many years ago, in the very early days of my ministry, I visited a dying man. In the street exactly opposite to the house, there stood the parish church. I visited that man

from day to day, and to hear his facile quotation of Scripture, his easy and happy assurance of salvation, his frequent expressions of trust in the Saviour, was, to my inexperience of human history, very delightful. But after visiting him day after day I regretted I had not learnt to deal more sharply with a wounded soul. The landlord of the house, as I was passing down-stairs a few days before the man's death, said—"I cannot allow this to go on, sir; I know the story of this man's life; he has been living in that house for twenty years, and, to my knowledge, he has never darkened the door of a place of worship during that time." The man had been familiar with the words of the Gospel in his early days. He had heard sermons and lived in a country where the words of Christ were on all men's lips, and he was so hardened that the very certain approach of death had no power to stir or to waken him to life. And he passed out of the world in that very state, in spite of warning and entreaty; he passed out of the world unmoved and unconcerned, with the words on his lips, "God is merciful; Christ is my Saviour." I have never forgotten, nor will forget, the fact when I see great crowds drawn together to hear the Gospel. I pray you never to forget the fact, that under this ministration of the Gospel not only is it possible, but it is very probable that he who is unjust will be unjust to the last, that he who is filthy will be filthy still.

But that is not all I have to say to you, dear friends and brethren. Thank God, that is not the whole of that word from the throne of God. There is another part of the message, another side to compensate this law of our being. Not only, "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that his filthy, let him be filthy still;" but "he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he

that is holy, let him be holy still." If there is, indeed, in the Gospel an infinite possibility of self-destruction, there is in the Gospel also an infinite possibility of Divine salvation, if men will but render themselves to it. It is true that God does not save men mechanically, that He does not transport them against their will to Heaven; but it is true that all the might of omnipotence waits upon the prayer of the sinner to deliver him. It is true that the Holy Spirit, whom his sinful and persevering impenitence may grieve and quench until He leaves him and leaves him for ever, will at the very lightest whispered prayer visit his soul at last. It is true that all those infinite privileges which man may misuse he may rightly use, and be blest in the use of them. If it be true that this book is unsealed for the use of Christ's disciple, and that, day after day, as he reads and studies that book, the truth appears on every page, then deeper and deeper shall grow his knowledge of the things of God, more unsealed shall lie the words of the prophecy before him. It is true that a man may harden his heart against these words of warning, and it is also true that those words of warning, sinking deeper into the soul, shall become, unto the right hand and left of every path, as a hedge with its sharp thorns keeping the wayfarer from the paths of sin. It is true that we may listen to its promises and turn aside with unbelieving and unloving eyes; and it is also true that we may listen to those words of promise, and strain upward the eyes of faith, till the very Heaven of Heaven reveals itself to us, and comes down amid the woes and wearinesses of the world, and we see the stream which flows from out the throne of God and the Lamb, and hear the rippling music of its waters, and gather the leaves which are for the healing of the nations, and heal with them the hurts of our own sins and the pangs of our own

sorrow, and catch a gleam of the light which shines for ever there, and begin already to know the meaning of the promise that God wipes the tears from all eyes. It is true that men may look at the cross till they almost forget it is there; but it is also true that men may look at the cross, and feeling it at first a heavy burden, wear it till at last they come to understand that the yoke is light and the burden is not heavy. Yea, then, let him that is righteous be righteous, in spite of weakness within and peril without, and in spite of all that the world, the flesh and the devil have been doing and will do to keep men from God. In spite of the entanglements of business, in spite of the vexations and cares of social life, in spite of the excitement of politics, and all there may be in the present day to turn men's minds away from God, in spite of everything that tends to distract, and tempt, and draw aside, if he will, if he choose, he shall be righteous still. The just, if he will, shall, in spite of all the wars of life, live and persevere to the end.

Take this, then, home to you, brethren, as that other message which we have to give you concerning the nature of this law of the kingdom of grace, that warns of the most dreadful penalties and yet gives the most blessed assurance of perseverance to the end. "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; he that is holy, let him be holy still." Ay, when next you are sore tempted to some sin, and the devil's whisper comes into your heart as it does come to every one of us, "I must sin this once, I cannot help it; it is really too great a temptation for me; I must yield now," think of these words of warning—He that will be unjust—he, that is, by his own choice—let him be unjust still. Then think of the word of encouragement—He that is willing and chooses to be righteous let him be—let him be and he shall be, in spite of the

might of temptation—he shall be righteous and holy still. There is no need that ever righteous men and women, that ever Christian soul should say, "I sinned because I could not help sinning." Not since Christ has died, not since Christ has risen, not since the Spirit of Christ has come down amongst the sons of men, can this possibly be true of any one, for this is the law, the eternal, Divine and blessed law of His Kingdom—"He that is holy, let him be holy still."

And so, brethren, in the warning and in the promise of these words, we close this mission here amongst you. We, who have been labouring amongst you, endeavouring to set forth the words of the Kingdom—its laws, its danger, its privileges, its blessing—we say to you, "Bear away with you these few thoughts that express all the danger and all the blessing of this Kingdom of Christ, all the the danger and all the blessing of those who, alas! have been listening to preachings concerning Christ, going, it may be, from church to church, hearing preacher after preacher, comparing preacher with preacher, asking which was the most eloquent, which was the most effective, which drew the largest congregations, which touched the heart most; asking also, let us hope,—and I trust *many* have been asking—'How much have I learnt of the things of God and my own soul? How much have I gained for the strength of my daily battle with the sins and sorrows and temptations of life?'"

The mission is drawing to a close. The unsealed words of the prophecy are in your possession, and we have but been gathering you together to hear the words of Christ and the Christ that that book reveals. We pass away, but let not the thoughts we have endeavoured to give you pass away, almost with the very echo of our words. Pray for yourselves, for those you love, and for this town that a

blessing may come abundantly with the words that we have spoken. Pray this, that the hearers of this word may escape the judgment and the curse that is involved in the words, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." Pray for yourselves and for other hearers, and pray, for Christ's dear sake, for the preachers too, that they may reap the fulness of the blessing that is implied in this word—"He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW'S, NORTHAMPTON, MARCH 26TH, 1871.

"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."—MATTHEW xxvii. 39, 40.

THE men that said those words were looking on at an execution. They went to see three men put to death in public, and put to a most disgraceful death, to a death more disgraceful amongst those people than an execution by hanging would be amongst us now—a death that was only inflicted on the very worst of criminals and slaves. They stood round the crosses where these—as they regarded them—convicted criminals were dying, and they laughed at their dying agonies, scoffed at them, and uttered these words of taunt at one of them especially.

A few years after, if one had visited the city where this occurred, he would have seen that a strange change had passed over it. It would have given signs of recent occupation by a bitter and a cruel enemy. He would have seen its walls battered down, its houses in ruins, the skeletons of men and women lying about the streets, a few half-starved wretches creeping in and out about the ruins of what had been their homes; and the great glory of the place, the central building of it, the temple, that they

were all so proud of, that on the day of this execution had been glittering like a ball of golden light, not a stone of it left upon the other, the very plough-share of its enemies having passed over its foundation. And he would have seen, in the desolation of that city, the punishment for the sin of those scoffers and rejecters on the day of execution. He would have read, if any one had given him at that moment the sacred books of this people—he would have read in one of them, which was written 1,500 years before this destruction, an exact description of all that came to pass. He would have read the prophecy given by the founder and law-giver of this very people 1,500 years before, and the description would have run thus:—"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee."* Then, as that visitor read on in the book of prophecy, written 1,500 years before, he would have found these words also—"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other;

* Deut. xxviii. 49—53.

and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."* And those words, as he read them, would have been an exact description of the history of that people from that day unto now. That people of the Jews has been scattered abroad throughout all the nations of the earth. Go where you will throughout the world—East, West, North, South—you find the Jew scattered amongst all the nations, mixing amongst them all, but never lost, always retaining his identity in the midst of them; but with no country, with no government, with no fixed and settled home—a stranger, a wanderer upon earth; and it is but yesterday he ceased to be, if he has even yet ceased to be, a hunted and a persecuted man. There are parts of the world still where this Jew has the failing heart and the troubled soul that were foretold for him. And mark, all this was foretold something like 3,000 years ago; and the Jew stands to this day a living evidence of the truth of the gospel that he rejected. He stands a living evidence of the prophecies of Moses and the mission of Christ.

Now it is of the faults and sin of that Jew that I am about to speak to you to-night. I have told you how he is a living evidence of Christianity; and if any man wants to know, and to have the evidence of the truth of the Bible and the truth of Christianity, let him read those chapters in Deuteronomy which tell you what the history of the Jews was to be, and let him read the history of the Jews since; let him see how exactly they agree, and let him explain, if he can, how it was possible that 3,000

* Deut. xxviii. 64, 65.

years ago, word for word, letter for letter, the history of this nation should have been foretold. But I am not going to speak to you about the Jews as an evidence of Christianity. I am going to speak of them as a warning and lesson for Christians now. I am going to ask you to understand what was the great fault and the sin of the Jews. Let us understand what came to pass, and take a lesson from their fault, from their punishment; for these things happened for our instruction.

Now, in order to understand the conduct of any one who lived a long time ago, or even the conduct of any one in the present day, we must try to put ourselves in his place. We must not judge of his action by its consequences, or by what we now know he ought to have done. Possibly he did not know what we know, or he might have acted otherwise. Certainly he did not foresee all the consequences which we know have come to pass, or he would have acted otherwise. Therefore we cannot judge any one fairly, especially any one who lived long ago, unless we cast ourselves back as far as we can, and, putting ourselves in his place, try to understand what he felt.

Now let us put ourselves back, if we can, beside these Jews as they stood that day on Calvary looking at the three victims on their crosses. What did they see, or think they saw? They certainly did not think they saw what we now know they did see—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Incarnate Saviour, who had come down from Heaven to save men by that death upon the cross. They were hardly to be expected to know what even His own disciples did not fully understand at that time. All we have known since of the blessing that came from that cross, and of the blessed and mysterious reasons why He hung upon that cross, was unknown to them. He said of

them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was in ignorance they did it. We must try to put ourselves in their very ignorance to do them justice, and in order to see what fault they committed. Let us see what they did see. They saw three men hanging before them in agony, and they believed them to have been guilty; and they especially regarded one of them—Him who hung in the midst—as a very great criminal, as a blasphemer, sentenced by their law to death, and as they thought, or persuaded themselves to think, justly put to death. Let us try to judge them by their own standard.

What is the first thing that is very clear about these men, and the very great sin they were guilty of? They were guilty, at any rate, of the sin of cruelty. Let us suppose, for one moment, that all they said was true, if we can venture to imagine such a thing. Let us suppose those three were criminals. Were they undeserving of their pity? Were they to laugh at them as they watched the death-sweat streaming down their faces, or to wag their heads at them in derision? It was a savage cruelty towards those men, whatever they were. The multitude of that day was very cruel, very bitter when its passions were roused. Very heartless and savage was the aroused multitude of Jerusalem, and yet let us be just with these men. Very possibly and very certainly, if you had taken those men one by one, and asked them, "Do you really take pleasure in the dying agonies of these men?" "No," they would have said, "it is a horrible thing to think of." If you had taken those men at their own homes, you would have found them not all abandoned and cruel, but you would probably have found them domestic men, with wives and children, and not unkindly men. Yet you get these men together in a rage, and, as they look on these dying men, they laugh and scoff at them. What does that

teach? That the passions of men are multiplied as they gather together in masses. And when men gather together in multitudes or great mobs, they say and do things that they would shrink from the very thought of saying or doing if you took them one by one, in cold blood, a few hours before. It shows us the latent amount of mischief and madness and cruelty that is in the heart of man. It teaches us this, that the multitude is not always in the right. It teaches us this, that the voice of the people is not always the voice of God.

We hear a great deal, in these days, about the voice of the people, and the will of the people, and the majesty of the people; and we are told that, above all things, the aim of those who follow Him who hung on the cross, is just that they should please the people, and that, if they don't please the people, something must be wrong. And how was it with Him who hung upon the cross? He did not please the people altogether. Was His life so very wrong and wicked then? Had he given them any just cause for cruelty? The voice of the people is not always the voice of God, and it is not the business of the ministers of Christ always to be pleasing the people, always to be thinking, "If we don't please the people, something must be wrong in our teaching." It is the business of the minister of Christ to teach the people. It is the business of the minister of Christ to warn the people, and to rebuke the people at times, and not always his business to please them; and it is not always the case, when the people in great multitudes, or by great majorities, cry out for something, that they are right. "Not this man," the great majority of them cried—"not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber, and they would rather have had the life of the robber-murderer saved than the life of the holy Jesus.

Here is a lesson for us all in this day of ours, when the people gather together in masses more and more—not only to the ministers of Christ, but to the people. It is a lesson for you. Distrust yourselves now and then. Don't be sure, when you are very angry and very eager about something, that you are always right Think of the story of those who gathered round that cross, cruelly and savagely reviling the Man that hung on it. It is just possible that the many may at times be very much in the wrong.

Then observe, in the next place, the fickleness of these people. It was only three or four days before that the very people who were yelling their savage delight at the death of Jesus, had been shouting before Him, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!"—drawing their garments before Him, strewing branches of trees before Him, and shouting and cheering Him on His way. They cheered for Him one week, and yelled for His death the next week. And in these days again, when people shout and cheer, and praise this man and hiss that man, it is well for us to remember that the multitude may be very fickle and very changeful, and that it is not a wise thing, and not a right thing, for the ministers of the Crucified One that the multitude reviled, to be always thinking of being popular, and always trying to please the people. Here you see, then, our human nature, the old nature that is in every one of us, coming out in these Jews. They hated Christ, and changed their minds about Christ, not because they were Jews, but because they were men, and just because the same human nature was in them that is in us—the same fickle, uncertain, unsteady, passionate, revengeful, cruel nature—just for that very reason they did what they did. And any of us might do the same to-

morrow if the power and grace of Him that hung on that cross did not keep us back.

In the next place I ask you to observe how much the power and grace of Him that was crucified has kept men back since. To understand this, you must read much of the history of the world, and especially of olden days. The history of Christendom has its own share of cruelty and evil. Yet, if you compare the history of Christendom with that of the heathen nations, and how they went to war and treated captives or criminals, or governed their families or cared for their poor; and think of all the social and political life of great pagan or heathen nations, and compare it with the social and political life of Christian nations, you will see a very great difference. You will see, too, that the worst form of Christianity the world has as yet known is better than the best form of Paganism, in respect of charity, brotherly kindness, pity, and love. And if you read the words of Him who hung on the cross, how he bade men love one another, forgive one another's trespasses, do to others as they would have others do unto them, you will understand this, that if Christianity has not done more than it has done, it is because Christians have not obeyed the teaching of their Master, and that if Christians had only been as Christ, there would have been far less evil and sorrow in Christendom than there have been.

But I ask you to take a step further with me, and try to find out why it was the Jews were so savagely angry with Jesus. Why was it they reviled Him when He was dying? There must have been some reason, however unjust or insufficient that reason might be. Men do not usually pass from one extreme to another without some reason. Why was it that they shouted at the death of Him whom, a week before, they had cheered to the echo?

The first reason was this—He had greatly disappointed them. When they cheered Him, as He passed into Jerusalem a week before his death, they called Him the Son of David, and they believed that He had come as their temporal king to reign over Jerusalem, to reign over the Jews, drive back the Romans, and bring back to them peace and plenty. They expected a great temporal kingdom, with the power and prosperity they had enjoyed before. They expected that His kingdom would have been a kingdom of this world. Then, when they found that this Man would not be their king, and that His kingdom was not of this world, that He had not come to save them from the Romans and give them their old power back again, they were desperately angry and disappointed. They thought of a Mighty One; they knew that miracles had been wrought by Christ, and they thought that, by the word of His mouth, He would banish the army of their oppressors, and make them a great nation. And when He did not do that, He disappointed them, and they hated Him for it.

You may not make the same mistake about Christianity now. You may not say as they said—"Come down from that cross; save Thyself and us if Thou art able to do it." But how often do men expect Christianity to do something for them in this world, to make them richer, to make them happier, to give them a larger share of this world's good, to undo the wrongs and the inequalities in this world, to make the poor man rich and the rich man poorer; to bring about a new order of things. And men say, "What has Christianity done for us that we should believe in it?" They are saying what a man said to Him in the days of His flesh—"Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me;" and Christ answered, "Man, who made me a judge and a

divider over you?" Our Lord did not come into this world to divide the inheritance between man and man, and put everything straight in this world, making the rich poor and the poor rich. He came into this world to save rich and poor from their sins. He came into this world, not to establish a worldly kingdom, but to establish a spiritual kingdom. He came into this world, not to tell us that it was to be made straight in His time or in our time, but He came to tell us that He had bought it with His blood, and the time was yet to come when it would be made straight and right. He came to tell us that this was not the only world for Him and us. He came to tell us that, in that other world in the day of His coming, He is coming as a Judge to put everything right and to give every man his reward; to deal justly with every man, giving every man that share of the eternal inheritance of happiness and bliss which he may have earned in this world; coming to give every man his wages for his life's work. But this is to come by His death and resurrection and His coming again. It is to come by that suffering on the cross on which He hung. It is to be life out of death; it is to be joy won by suffering; it is to be peace gained by sorrow, holiness gained by self-denial. And He is coming for the establishment of this kingdom and no other. He has not come to make every man in this world free. He has not come to fill every man's hands full of this world's money. But He has come to make every man free, if he will be free, from the burden of his own sins and his own lusts. He has come to give every man an equal share of the Father's love and the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. He has come to make every man really a brother in the Kingdom of Christ. He has come to do that, and if men will take it from Him they will have it now. But they will not have what they expect or demand

from Christianity—the world put to rights before the day of judgment.

That is my answer to-night to the questions that have been asked the mission clergymen in this parish. We are asked—How do you answer this fact that some are rich and some are poor? Will Christianity put that right? No, it won't. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to put that right now. That is the present condition of the world; but He has come into the world to promise that it shall be put right hereafter, to tell you that, rich or poor, every man may earn an eternity of happiness; He has come to tell the poorer man of this parish, the son of toil, who weakens and sickens over his labour, that there is rest, eternal rest, and joy, an eternal joy. He has said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." He has said, "Come and I will deliver you from worse enemies than those you have been talking of—from your own sins, passions, and selfishness. I will save you, and give you the eternal inheritance of God." He has come to do that, not to put the world to rights just yet. It is a great mistake, then, my dear friends, to ask Christ for what He has not come to give.

It is quite true that though He has not come to give this now, and it was not His object to do it, yet there is something of this done already, not done as men think it could be done, by turning the world upside down; as if the world would not turn itself upside down in a very few days if an artificial equality were made; as if, after dividing all the money equally, it would not all be unequal again in two or three days; as if profligate men would not waste it, economical men keep it, a large family want more, and a man with a small family less; as if the inequalities of life could be prevented from deve-

loping themselves however you changed society. Christianity has not come to do that, but to create a feeling of real brotherhood between man and man, to make the rich man, if only a follower of Christ, the brother of the poor man, and, what is harder lesson, to make the poor man feel he is the brother of the rich man. And believe me, if this Christianity were blotted out there would be fewer visitants of the sick and dying, less care and attention for the poor than now. Christ Jesus has not come down from the cross just yet; He has not come down to save Himself and His followers from all physical suffering and sorrow in this life; but yet from that cross there streams a blessed light for those who suffer and sorrow here; and though He has not come down from the cross, the light of the cross has been, and is, in many a suffering and sorrowing home since then. "Come down from the cross?" No; our Lord hung dying upon that cross that He might save men.

It was not only that He disappointed men, but that He provoked men. Our Lord Jesus Christ was a stern and faithful witness for God, His Father. He never hesitated to tell men of their sins. He never hesitated to denounce the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, or the solemn godlessness of the Sadducees. He spoke to the hypocrite, the liar, the thief, the impure, wherever He met them; and as He passed through the nation He was like a conscience in the heart of men, for ever exposing all that was evil and base, and all that was unworthy; and for this they hated Him, because He warned them of danger and rebuked them for their sins. My dear friends do not let us deceive ourselves in this matter. One of the reasons why the religion of Christ is not always a popular religion is that it does what Christ did—it rebukes sin. It puts a restraint on self-indulgence. It tells the intemperate man "You must

leave off drinking," because no drunkard can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. It tells the fallen that the fallen and the whoremonger can have no place in the Kingdom of Heaven. It tells the liar that his part shall be in the lake that burns with fire. It tells the selfish man that he cannot have himself and his lusts, and Christ too. It tells all men that if they would follow Christ, they must take up His cross and follow Him. Men naturally do not like it. They like a comfortable and easy religion. "Do what you like now and somehow or other all will be right at the end. If there is a God, He is a merciful one and He is too good-natured to punish sin." Men say that, although they are being punished every day. Men say there is no hell, when there is a hell in the house of every ungodly man —in the house of the selfish, cruel, unkindly, passionate, intemperate, lustful or dishonest man. In such a house there is something very like a hell upon earth already. And yet there are men who say it is impossible there can be any hell hereafter. At all events they do not like to hear of a hell; they do not like the stern faithfulness of Him who hung on the cross; and they cannot bear to have a check on their sins. They did not like Him, and with the Gergesenes, they "besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts." They said "Our life is a short one, and we will do as we like; as to a hereafter we will take our chance of that; let us alone, ye ministers of Christ, let us alone in this life; we will have none of Christ on the cross." There are many men who turn from the minister of Christ from a mistake as to his motives, or from a long estrangement from the means of grace. Mistaken prejudice about the doctrines of Christ and ignorance of the life of Christ make many men turn from His ministers;—and I say it without desiring to be bitter or unkind, for you know it as well as I—there are

many men who turn *from* Christ just because if they turn *to* Christ they will have to turn from their favourite sins and their own lusts; so they will not have Him who hangs on the cross.

Christ disappointed, Christ provoked, and Christ terrified these Jews. They feared that the Romans would come and take away their place as a nation if He went on teaching as He did, and so they became the victims of fright, and were filled with the worst kind of anger—the anger that comes from fear. And so now, Christ has power to scare the soul of the sinner by the word that He speaks very low and clear in the heart of every one of you. Men do not like to hear that "still small voice" that speaks at times when they are going to sin, that speaks oftener long after they have sinned, and tells them of a coming judgment. They do not like that cloud of fear that passes over their hearts because they have an instinctive dread that it is a cloud of the day of judgment, a shadow of the throne, that is coming already. They do not like it, and would rather put away the thought of another world and a coming judgment; and so they do not like the Crucified One.

And so, because Christ disappoints, because Christ provokes, because Christ terrifies, men dislike and revile Him now, just as men disliked and reviled Him then. And yet, if they did but know, if they could but understand how He that hangs upon the cross, hangs there because He loves with an infinite love every one of those who so revile him; if they could but understand that He refused to come down from the cross and save Himself because He knew that unless He died they could not live; if they could but understand that upon that cross they had hung Him whose heart was heavy with the weight of the world's sins and the world's sorrows, and who was giving His life

for the life of the world; if they could but understand that all they really desired He has to give them, only not in the way they expect to have it; if they could but understand how the infinite wealth and blessedness of the world to come were purchased on the day that He hung there; if they could but understand this, that what is really wrong in this world and puts everything else wrong is the selfish sin which is in the heart of every one of us and that He has come to save us from our sins; if they could but understand that in no other way can the world be set right, but by the virtue that comes out of the cross on which He hung; if they could but understand that that atonement, that atoning cross, that dying love of the dying Christ, is but a manifestation of the love of the Heavenly Father, who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life,"—if they would understand this, then they would throng to the foot of the cross, not reviling, not hating, not wagging their heads, but casting themselves down before the Saviour that died for them, and beseeching Him to sprinkle, with His cleansing blood, the hearts that need the cleansing; asking to have, but this one thing of all others given them, release from their sins; asking to be made strong against the temptations and trials of the world; asking to have given them faith and courage to take up the cross which their Lord has carried before them, believing they should yet wear the crown. If we could only understand, every one of us, the wealth of Divine love treasured on that cross; if we could only see the gleam of the crown of gold through the crown of thorns; if we could only understand what He did for us; then should we in loving sorrow cast ourselves before the cross, understanding that it was *our* sins, along with the sins of

others—that it was *our* sins and our sorrows that nailed Him there.

My dear friends, we are the preachers of this cross of Christ. We, the ministers of Christ, who come amongst you, come in the name of the Crucified One, and we lift up that cross of Christ; and we tell you this, that Christ cannot come down from that cross at the bidding of any one. We cannot explain away the doctrines of our Master. We cannot tell you of any other way of being saved, except by the cross. We cannot tell you of any other salvation, but by the blood of Christ. We cannot tell you of any other Kingdom of life and joy, except the Kingdom begun in this world and which will be perfected in the world to come. But we will tell you, not explaining the difficulties of the cross—there are many difficulties about Christianity and about the cross of Christ no man can explain in this world—we tell you that in spite of difficulties, there is salvation in that cross; that the time is yet to come that is promised in the same Book, which foretold 3000 years before the sufferings of Jerusalem—the fulfilment of that prophecy of another Jerusalem, a golden city with its gleam of life enjoying the presence of God, a prophecy of a city where God wipes away all tears from the eyes, through whose streets flow the waters of life, a prophecy of a city where there shall never be heard a sigh nor seen a tear. And we tell you that it is through and by the cross it comes; and it is only by believing on Him who hung on the cross that you can be saved. And we ask you to make the experiment, if it is an experiment; and He who hung on the cross will save you from your sins. If there be one here to-night who does not believe what we are saying, let me entreat him to make this experiment and try it fairly.

No experiment will succeed unless you try it fairly.

If you come with a secret, besetting sin, an impure heart, with drunkenness, lust, selfishness; if you come with any secret and cherished weakness, you are not trying the experiment fairly. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Come, with a willingness to give up what you know to be wrong—come to Christ. Try this experiment, whether you be amongst the rich or the poor, for there is often as much godlessness amongst the rich as amongst the poor, and as much prayerlessness. Go on your knees; try it for one year; go on your knees, morning and evening, and ask Him who hung upon the cross to save you from your sin. Say, "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief; Lord Jesus Christ, save me from my sin." Do that honestly, day after day, and if the experiment fail, come and tell us your doubt. But do not doubt until you try it. See whether those saints, those holy men that have been living and dying in this last eighteen hundred years were all living and dying in a delusion in handing down from generation to generation—"We did come to Christ and He did save us; we were sinners and now we know what it is to be delivered from sin and we are saved by the cross." If you try that experiment and fail, you will be the first who has tried it and failed. Go to Christ, because He says, "He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

Go to the cross, ask Him that hung upon the cross, to deliver you from your sins now; and see if He does not do it. Then, as you stand before the cross,—as we all stand before the cross—and look upon the face of Him who hung there, and see how it beams with a divine and unutterable love for those for whom He is dying, we shall feel that He is a very Saviour, that He who died there is the Saviour of the dying sinner, that He

who was buried and rose again is the Saviour who desires us to rise out of the grave of our own sin and lusts; and we shall say, "I give myself to Christ my Lord and beseech of Him to save me." So surely as we do this, so surely as we take up His cross and follow Him, so surely will He bring us—it may be a long way, it may be a weary way, but it will be a safe way—to that Heavenly Jerusalem where He is to receive us at last. God grant that this may be the story of the life of every one here. God, for Christ's sake, grant that out of the labours and prayers of this mission, this fruit of souls be given to the ministers of the Crucified One, that we may bring many to the foot of the cross of Christ and that the cross of Christ may guide them every one to Heaven.

THE DIFFICULTY AND THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

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Preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, March 19, 1873.

"And He said unto them, When ye pray say, Our Father."—St. Luke xi. 2.

IT is of prayer and the difficulties that attend the act of prayer that I am desired to speak to you to-night. I have to ask you to consider with me to-night whether there is any difficulty, and if so what difficulty, attending that act in which we have all been just engaged. Is it really a difficult thing for us Christians, when we pray, to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," and if so, why is it difficult?

Let us consider this question; it touches all our religious life, all our hopes in this world and in the world to come. Either what you and I have now been doing is a most solemn and profane farce, or it is the most real act we can possibly perform, and between these two there is no alternative. Either we have a Father in Heaven and we may speak to Him, or we have not a Father, or if we have, we may not speak to Him. Let us try then to see what are the difficulties that attend this act of speech to our Father in Heaven, and there is contained in my text the words of our Lord which bid us speak to the Father, and from this surely we shall learn the reasons why we may speak or why it should be hard to speak.

In the first place, observe the difference between us who say these words, and those who first heard them. We Christians worship Him who said these words, we pray to Him who taught us thus to pray; He is for us something more than the Founder of our religion, as He is too often called; He *is* our religion. He is for us God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; we pray to Him, through Him and for His sake to our Father in Heaven. It was not so with those who first heard these words. Our Lord's disciples at that time were not, properly speaking, Christians; they were what we should now call Deists, that is to say, all that we regard as distinctively Christian in our day, all those dogmas of Christianity that distinguish it from Judaism and make the creed of Christendom as we know it, were almost entirely unknown to those disciples. The light that is now with us as the day, was to them but the reddening streak on the horizon. The light we see God in is the light that comes from all those doctrines preaching for us the profounder meanings that lie beneath the word Father. Between them and us lie all the differences between Judaism and Christianity. Between those disciples and us as we say "Our Father," there lie Gethsemane, Calvary, Easter Morning, Ascension Day, Whitsuntide and all that these dread words mean.

It is clear then, dear friends, is it not, that we must use these words in a somewhat different and deeper sense to that in which the Jews used them. Whatever men may say of the impracticable nature of dogma does not apply to men's prayers, because as our thought of God is, so will our speech to God be, and it is impossible that you can change or deepen your ideas of God and your religion without, in a like proportion, changing and deepening your speech to Him, and therefore though we use the

same words it is impossible that we can use them in the same sense.

Now, as one step in the question we have to examine to-night, I ask you to begin by considering what is the real difference between the Jewish prayer and our prayer. Was it easier or harder for those Jewish disciples to say "Our Father" than for us Christians; and if so, why was it so? Let us try and put ourselves, in imagination, in the place of those who first heard these words, and see what deeper or other meanings they have for us. Let us ask, before we go further, what is prayer? Prayer is in its broadest and simplest sense nothing else than the instinctive appeal of weakness to power. Place any creature with any amount of intelligence in the power of of another creature, dependent upon him for help and mercy, and instinctively the feebler appeals to the stronger. We find this, not only in ourselves, but in the lower animals. The very cry that the creature makes when it finds itself in the grip of the stronger animal is a rudimentary form of prayer, and the wistful look in the eyes of the dumb creatures we have in our keeping, as they look to us for help or pity, is a higher form of the same. It is the appeal in all cases of the weaker to the stronger. And we men, when we find ourselves at the mercy of a fellow man, unable to command or to reason another into giving or doing what we ask, instinctively fall to prayer; we entreat, and we cannot help entreating.

It may be that we may educate ourselves out of this instinct of entreaty; it may be that pride, the sense of duty, the fear of repulse, may keep us from obeying our natural instinct; but there is not a single person who, if he were in a position to need the aid of another, would not instinctively entreat. There is then an instinct of entreaty in every intelligent creature; but there is more

than that, there is an instinctive consciousness in every one that there is in the being we appeal to a correspondence with our instinct of entreaty. There is a sense that there is in that other person an instinct of compassion that stands over against our instinct of entreaty. We feel that the person will be moved by our prayer, because there is there a will and a moral nature capable of being moved. That is the difference between dealing with a force and dealing with a power. We never pray to a force, we never think of entreating the elements, of beseeching the wind and the waves to have mercy; they are forces and not powers; but if I speak to a person, by the very fact that it is a person I speak to, I know there is that in that person, I cannot tell why, but because it is a person and not a blind and mechanical force, there is a moral nature that can be moved by pity, and there is a will that is free. So surely as you speak to an intelligent being, then you feel there is that in him that must heed your prayer; that your entreaty or want has a real power upon his soul.

That is the real idea of prayer, and you express it in the most common way when you say of a person incapable of feeling pity or listening to entreaty that he is inhuman, meaning he has not got a perfect human nature, he is lower than man because he cannot hear prayer. So that even when we kneel to pray to one another, though we do not say "Our Father," we cannot pray at all unless we say "Our brother"—unless we feel that there is something of kinship, of relationship and identity common to us and the being we appeal to.

That is prayer in its rudest form; it is the recognition of a kindred nature in a stronger being that moves the appeal to that being. And prayer in general is nothing else than this. Let a man feel himself the helpless dependent of a God or Gods. Let him feel that they are

mightier Beings than he, who can dispose of his destiny, and in spite of himself he cries to those Beings for mercy. This is the very essence of prayer. It may be the coarser form of the prayer of the savage, or it may be the prayer of the Christian; it is weakness in the presence of power; it is the human soul in its attitude of helplessness, of dependence, of terror, but of confidence. The being who kneels to pray must believe that in the being he prays to, there is an instinct of compassion, a kinship to his own nature, or there could be no prayer. In the God before whom he kneels, he absolutely sees mercy; therefore in the heart of the creature that prays, however deformed or monstrous, however hideous the picture his superstition draws of that God, there must be in it something of the human element of tenderness, of pity, dim and distorted it may be, but there must be something of kinship to humanity, something of the sense of Fatherhood, however dim, strangely far off, and strangely distorted through the fogs and mists of superstition, as it reaches the worshipper of the unknown God; something of the sense of power there must be, or the heart of man can never rise in prayer. Before we pray we must at least strive to say "Our Father." Never did one being teach another to pray, who did not in some way or other say, "when ye pray say Our Father." This, then, is the first idea of prayer; it is a being supplicating a supernatural Being to whom he feels he has some kinship.

Let us then go on to the next question. What form did this instinct of prayer take for the Jews? The Jew was, as I have said, a Deist, properly speaking; he was a Deist by education and by Divine revelation. The Jewish people never *reasoned* themselves into a conviction that there is only one God, and there never yet was in this

world a nation that did or could do so. Individuals here and there in the world's history have found, or thought that they had found, the truth that there was one supreme God, but the masses of mankind never yet found that for themselves.

For a nation, for the masses of mankind, there are but two thoughts about God—one is Paganism, the other is Atheism. One is the superstitious belief in many Gods, and the other is the utter denial, it may be merely practically, or it may be speculatively and intellectually, that there is any God. The one is the belief that sees God everywhere, the other is the darkness that sees Him nowhere; one or other of these is the fate of every human being who has no revelation. Superstition peoples the world with Gods, men see and hear a God in every rock and stream and tree; in the sound of the wind, and in the roar of the waves, they hear the voice of many Gods. And they cower before them and entreat their mercy, and believe that in the manifold workings of nature, they have the capricious wills of their imaginary Gods. And with this superstition science is ever at war, —it is ever teaching men that what they believe to be Gods are no Gods; it is ever resolving what seems will into force, and what seems force into law. The domain of what is known is ever intruding itself further and further, day by day and age by age, into the region of the unknown. The mists of the early dawn of man's ignorance are melting away before the clear white light of science; and science breaks into fragments one after another,—breaks into the minutest fragments, as with the wand of a magician, the idols of the heathen, and strewing their temples with them, asks the worshippers, not always angrily, sometimes very sadly and sorrowfully, and calmly, Where are now your Gods?

Between these two extremes, the superstition that sees God everywhere and the scientific desolation that sees Him nowhere, there is no logical standing ground for man without revelation. The revelation that comes from above, and tells us that there is a God, a miraculously attested revelation—it is that, and that alone, which has ever redeemed the masses of mankind from the intellectual crevasses, from the cold walls on either side of this horrible pit. This inextricable difficulty between superstition and science alone has not raised up the human soul to light and life. It was for the Jew that there came of old the miraculous speech from God; for it needs, not only speech, but miraculously attested speech, to deliver man from this difficulty. Into this world, where science is waging that desolating war, and superstition is degrading it with science; into this world there came from the Father a word, and that word was a miracle, and attested to the superstitious worshipper of many Gods that there was one Will that ruled the many forces in nature, that there was one God, the God of the hills and valleys, the rocks, the streams, sun, moon and stars. And the same revelation gave, and gives its answer to the mere man of science, and tells him by the very utterance of the miracle which controls the elements and disputes the forces of nature, that beneath the law there is a Will, and behind the force there is an eternal and unchangeable Creator.

This is the answer, and the only answer, to man's soul and understanding; and it was God's mercy that gave it to the Jews. The Jew was educated by revelation into the belief that there was one God; the whole training and history of the Jew, from the hour of the call of Abraham till the coming of the Son of man, was a long series of lessons in this one great truth.

All the marvels of the seen and unseen providences of his history, all the sorrows and weariness and shame, all the triumphs and glories of his chequered life, all the minute ceremonial of his worship which seems to us so strangely elaborate; all this was directed to one end, and one only, —the bringing the Jew upon his knees before his one Father in Heaven. All the utterances through all the ages of his national life had this one lesson,—"Hear, oh, Israel, the Lord thy God is one God;" speak to Him, pray to Him, entreat Him, He is a God that heareth and answereth prayer. And so you see the very idea of a revelation to the Jew was to teach him, "When ye pray, say Our Father which art in Heaven." The prayer and worship of the Jew was the worship of a Father, founded upon a revelation; it was speech to God, based upon the word from God. That was the end of Jewish prayer,—and, brethren, our Christian prayer rests upon precisely the same foundation. We speak to God, we can justify our speech, only because we know that God has spoken to us, and said "Pray to Me"; only on the ground of a miraculously attested revelation can we really justify the worship of our Father in Heaven.

Let me say distinctly what I mean by prayer to our Father. I do not mean the act of adoration, of admiration, of praise, but I mean distinctly the act of petition, of asking our Father in Heaven to give us something, and believing that He will, if He thinks fit, give us the thing we ask for. That, and that only, is the real meaning of the efficacy of prayer, and that, and that only, is the real difficulty. There is no difficulty whatever in believing that the act of prayer may have some reflex benefit to the soul of the person who prays; to say, for instance, that though we cannot get what we ask, we may indirectly get good dispositions by asking

for what we know we cannot have presents no intellectual difficulty whatever; the only difficulty in that case is to imagine the possibility of anyone praying under such conditions. Of course, to suppose that a human being should go down upon his knees and make believe (because it comes to that) to pray to God, in the hope that by that act of prayer there should come into his soul these benefits, these spiritual revelations, which can only come to the man who really does pray, is to suppose an utter impossibility. No rational human being ever would pray under such circumstances.

The real meaning about the difficulties of prayer is this: Can we believe that there will be an answer from God giving us what we ask and not something else, but that very thing if He sees fit, and giving it because we ask for it? This is the real difficulty, and there are very real and special difficulties connected with this act of prayer. Strange if there were not when the mystery of man meets the mystery of God; strange if there were no difficulties attending the speech of man to God. There are most real and painful intellectual difficulties attending the act, and there are difficulties inherent in the act, that rise to the very surface of a man's mind when he thinks intellectually at all of prayer—they are not of our day and our faith only, but of all times and all places. You will find the sceptical difficulties of prayer stated as fully and more bitterly and agonizingly in the book of Job than in the last page of the last sceptical article in the last sceptical review on the table of your Union or Common Room. Job and Solomon knew the difficulties of prayer. He knew what it was who wrestled with prayer from the dawn of day, who cried, "Oh, wretched man that I am." It is no new thing. What then is our real difficulty? God forbid we should

make light of it, it is not the difficulty of the sceptic alone,—there are those that feel it who are as far as possible from being sceptical; there are those minds in which the thought of speech to the Father wakes no joy, but an agonizing sorrow; there are reverend and loving hearts that would give the world that they might kneel and pray; it is no difficulty only of the study and lecture room, it is in the heart and soul of a young man who kneels down in his own college room and prays to God in the prayer that his mother taught him, and trembles and turns pale in the very solitude of his prayer, as he finds the old dear words falter upon his lips, and asks, "Can I pray as my mother thus prayed, at whose knees I learned to say 'Our Father'?"

These are difficulties that meet us in our daily life; not in the brightness and sunshine of worldly happiness, when all goes well, but they haunt us like ghosts in the dark hour of our sorrow; they haunt the sick-bed where another is waging his desperate war with death; they start up like hideous things round about the open grave where love looks down and sees hope and joy buried for ever. Prayer! Can God hear prayer? Will He hear my prayer, and if He can, oh, gracious and merciful God and Father in Heaven, why has He not heard that prayer that came out of the very bitterness of my heart in the hour of my agony? These are not sceptical and speculative difficulties; God forbid we should so lightly speak of them; they come from the hearts of living, striving, suffering men. And on the other hand, those who speak lightly not of these difficulties but of the act of prayer, who can find it in their hearts to scoff and sneer at a man on his knees, have never known what it was to strive and suffer and cry with their heart to a Father in Heaven. There is no room for

laughter, or scoffing, or sneering on one side or the other on this most terrible of problems, the question: Is man an orphan in the world, has he or not the power of speaking to his Father in Heaven?

Let us then try to trace what are these difficulties about the act of prayer. Manifold as they are they may all be summed up in two; one is, it is impossible that our petitions can be answered; the other is, it is highly improbable that any one petition may be answered. Impossibility or violent improbabilty, these are the difficulties. Let us understand and face this distinctly. It is alleged that this impossibility of having an answer to prayer arises from one of two things. One is the physical perfection of nature, the other is the moral perfection of God. It is said, as regards the physical perfection of nature, God governs nature by uniform laws and by the best laws. All these laws are uniform, and are so immutably dependent on each other that you cannot disturb one without disturbing all the rest; then if you pray for some change in your outward circumstances, you are praying either for something which God will give you by the course of these natural laws, and in that case you need not ask for it, or you are praying for a disturbance of those laws, and they cannot be disturbed at every moment by the myriad prayers of human beings. You are asking for an impossibility. That is the argument of uniformity of natural laws.

And as to the moral perfection of God, it is said God has ordered all things for the best. Whatever He has ordered for me, then, is best, and to ask Him to change that order is in fact to say it is not the best order. It is an imputation upon His character, and therefore my duty is resignation and not prayer. These are the two real difficulties about prayer, as I understand them, and in the

first place we must see how far they go, and let there be no faltering in this matter. The objection to the impossibility of all answer to prayer applies, not only to prayer for things temporal, but also for things spiritual. Of all the idle distinctions that ever have been drawn in any controversy, the idlest of all is this which tells us we may ask for things spiritual because they may and can be given, but we must not ask for things in the natural world because they cannot be given,—that we may pray for good dispositions, but that it is a folly to ask for good weather; that God may interfere in the one but not in the other. Surely this is utterly illogical; surely if there be law anywhere there is law everywhere. Believe me this distinction between the spiritual and temporal cannot last long; it will give way and is giving way at this moment before the analysis of the metaphysical materialist, and giving way before the knife of the anatomist that tells us man's moral nature depends upon his physical condition. And it is as gross an absurdity to ask for better dispositions as for better weather.

No; let us face the alternative distinctly and completely. The question lies between the power of God to grant anything whatsoever, and His power to grant all things. If, when I kneel before my Father in Heaven, there lie between Him and my petition anything whatsoever save that Father's will, prayer becomes impossible. Either He can give me—observe I say, can—either He can give me everything, or I have no reason to be sure that He can give me anything. And to that alternative we must come sooner or later. And how shall we answer those who profess to say that an answer to our prayer is impossible? Brethren, we will not challenge and follow our opponents into irreverent and material experiments upon the will and power

of Almighty God Himself. We will not test Him with prayer as a chemist tests an acid by the use of an alkali; we do not believe that the soul of man and the heart of God are mechanical forces acting one upon another like an electric cable, and to be weighed, balanced and measured in the scales of the physical. We believe that the soul and heart, wherever they may be, are inscrutable and immeasurable mysteries, that their forces are moral and not mechanical, that they cannot be tested and measured by scientific tests. We, therefore, are not keenly anxious to make scientific rules for Almighty God.

We pass this, and our answer is distinct: We grant you to the fullest extent that the difficulties you have raised are more or less real difficulties, but what we say is that they do not amount to impossibilities. If you can demonstrate the impossibility in any book professing to be a revelation, it ceases to be a revelation. No amount of miracle can possibly prove that two and two make anything else than four, but you must give us a demonstration as clear as that in a matter so mysterious as this, before we can say you have proved there is no prayer. And in this matter of law, have you so absolutely demonstrated to yourself the impossibility that law presents to the answer to prayer, as to be quite certain that there are no laws of nature hidden from your discovery? You who talk about God as uniform, are you absolutely certain there is a law of immutability? Do you know enough of the action of law upon matter to dare to say there is not that in God which shall be a law of nature, wider, deeper, older than any laws you have discovered,—even the law that makes nature obey, the Word of God itself? Do you know what law is? Does it mean anything you can demonstrate? Can you demonstrate to us that law is not that which we Christians

believe it to be,—not the uniform acting of nature, but the uniform acting of the will of Him who created and ordained nature and who may disturb it if He pleases? Or can you prove that it is an absolute impossibility that even the outward thing we ask for may not be given us by the will of God without any disturbance of the law of which you speak?

We do not say that this is easy to understand, else why do we need a revelation to explain it? We do not say we can get rid of these difficulties, but we say you have not demonstrated the impossibility, you have not proved it so far as to tell me I may not pray to God, because I may not hope to change the order He has ordained for a better. Surely, I say, we cannot change for the better the order that He has ordained; but if His order be that we should pray, if He has suspended upon the act of prayer, certain gifts and blessings, as He has suspended upon the act of labour and toil certain other gifts and blessings, how can we say we disturb the order of God by prayer, any more than when we dig and reap and gather into barns? It is God's will when you feel sick that you should recover or die, why vex the order of God by prayer? Then why vex God by calling in a physician? If the one is reasonable, so is the other. We do not contend that we have disposed of the difficulties in the one case more than in the other; but we have said enough to show you they are not proved impossibilities. We not only admit the difficulties, we insist upon them. It is we Christians, we believers, we men who pray to a Father in Heaven, who tell you there are these difficulties, and that they make part of our very case for the necessity of a revelation. If there were no difficulties in man's speech to God, where were the need of God's word to man, that tells him he may pray?

This is the answer, the main part of the answer, to those who tell us that miracles and a revelation are not necessary. You who honestly believe and desire to pray, to have speech with God, who feel a misery that you cannot speak to God,—why the depth of that misery, or the earnestness of that wish? We call upon you to listen to us, when we tell you that God in answer to that wish has sent us a revelation that tells us we may pray. It is because you tell us the world is crying to its Father, like a child crying in the night, that we say the life of God, the face of the Father, and His voice have answered the cry. It is because you tell us the world is groping ever up the great altar steps that slope in their darkness up to God, that we tell you we have a Father in Heaven; that from the throne to where those altar steps lead up, there streams adown their centre, and far down the dismal depths of doubt, the bright stream of revelation, the white gleaming light from the throne of the Father in Heaven. And as it streams into the soul, it brings with it the revelation, "When ye pray, say Our Father which art in Heaven."

We give you then a reason for revelation, out of the very difficulties of prayer.

I have said that another difficulty about prayer was not its apparent impossibility, but its evident improbability; and that arises not from the perfection of God, but the insignificance of man. It is, indeed, a strange improbability that God should hear the prayers of you and me, that we, mere atoms upon a world that is itself an atom in a universe of worlds, should have speech with God, that our poor cry should reach to the throne of Him who has created a wilderness of worlds—very strange, wildly improbable even for the Deist; hard even for the Jew as he came to realize that God was a God of the whole

world, and not of the Jews only, that God was not only in Jerusalem but in all the earth. It was hard for him to believe that his prayer should be heard, very hard for us; "Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou so regardest him?" There is a real improbability in an answer to prayer. How does Christianity, the revelation of Jesus Christ, get rid of that difficulty? What has He come to be to us? He has come to be the revelation of the Father in the form of the Son, He has come to take upon Him our nature, to make this speck of a world of ours in the midst of a wilderness of worlds the scene of the mightiest miracle that was ever wrought, to work on earth incarnation, to be man as well as God, to take to Himself our nature, and to place that nature upon the very throne of God.

Is it, then, so strangely difficult to believe that the prayer of the soul for which Christ died should be heard by the eternal Father? But for what else did He come into the world but to make this probable? Improbable! it would be strange that man's prayer should be unanswered. Is it strange that the sun and moon should stand still, or the graves give up their dead at the entreaty of some poor unknown and insignificant creature, some poor old man or woman in this town of Oxford? To me it would seem far stranger that, if need were for the eternal soul of that redeemed one, the thing should not be; far stranger that nature should not be at the absolute command of the Son of God than that it should be. This is the real help we Christians have in prayer, when we understand the meaning of the word "Father." We believe we have a Father in Heaven because He has sent His Son on earth, and the Son has told us, "When ye pray, say Our Father." Then see how miraculously the Christian religion helps the idea

of the reasonableness of prayer in this way. I have said there is no limit to the possibility of the answer to prayer to one who is one with Christ in God, who can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," "my life is hid with Christ in God."

I say there is absolutely no limit to the possibility of answer to the prayer of such a person. But Christianity puts a distinct limit to all such prayers, because the religion of Jesus Christ tells us this, which was not known to the Jews, that we become members of God's family, children of the Father, as we enter into a Divine and Heavenly Kingdom: that it was to set up that Kingdom of our Father that Christ came into the world, and that the interest and success of that Kingdom are to be to us beyond and before anything else, that everything that can happen in this world to us and others is subordinate and conditioned upon the progress of that Kingdom. Our Lord bids us say, "Thy Kingdom come," before he allows us to say, "Give us this day our daily bread." Mark the limit this puts upon the prayer of the Christian. It is this: Oh, Father in heaven, grant me this physical gift which I ask of you, this change in my circumstances, this gift to my soul, but on this condition, that Thy Kingdom come first, and only on this condition do I ask, subject to the progress of Thy Kingdom. Look at it in this way and you see at once that Christian prayer is not a greedy, clamorous, selfish cry for this or that happiness, this or that pleasure, as some men would have you regard it, but a reasonable limited condition, the submissive cry of children to their Father, who in all their prayers still say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," "Thy Kingdom come."

This, you see, at once brings the Father nearer to us,

and limits at the same time the conditions and objects of our prayer. We pray temperately, resignedly, because we pray to a Father who has founded His Kingdom upon earth. So that, after all, it is easier, more reasonable for us Christians than for anyone else to pray ; and that is the point I have desired to bring you to in conclusion, and I have striven to bring you to it step by step with the dogmas of Christianity. Thank God for the word dogma, which means the truth revealed upon authority. The dogmas of Christianity are not hindrances, but a help to that which all men acknowledge to be the very soul of religion, the very intensest act of religious life—the act of prayer. We shall not gain in the simplicity nor yet in the earnestness of our prayers if we cast aside these dogmas one by one. The ruder our religion becomes, the harder and not the easier does the prayer become. You will no more make prayer easy by casting off the dogmas God has given us in these latter days than you will make daily life easier and more comfortable by getting rid of the improvements of modern civilization, and going back to the primitive condition of the savage.

Hold fast, then, we entreat and advise you in the name of Christ, the exalted Son of God, hold fast the truth He has taught, that you may pray to your Father in Heaven ; and hold fast the reason He has given you in His own incarnate life, and death, and resurrection, why you should pray. Kneel and pray to the Father through the Son, and pray this prayer with all your others ; that your belief in the Son may deepen your worship and faith in the Father, for it is in the act of prayer you learn belief. Meditation or reasoning concerning God will often weaken or dissipate our faith, but he who kneels upon his knees and lifts up his heart in prayer to the Father and says in the consciousness of truth that the Son has revealed, " Our

Father which art in Heaven," deepens the life of God in his own soul, and brings Heaven into his closed chamber, and finds the Father near him, even the Father that hears in secret.

The act of prayer is the central and moving spring of our nature; it is the very life of our life, without which we cannot live; it is the life which is unquenched when religion lies dead among men. Let no man deceive you by vain words, and substitute in you the Atheism of Philosophy, the fatalism of a mere intellectual system, a mere sentimental admiration of some unknown Deity, for the living faith in the living God, that sends a man on his knees in his hour of trouble and need.

Prayer is the very breath of our souls. Quench this and life becomes a burden; not perhaps so heavy a burden in the flush of early youth, when all is hope and expectation, and trouble is the thing of a day; but when life grows to be a serious and real thing and the gnawing cares and sorrows of the world, the disappointed ambition and blighted prospects, and worse than any of these, the mere sated weariness of life and its pleasures that full surely comes upon the man who lives upon pleasure alone—when these things come, to the prayerless man they make life a heavy burden. Without prayer the world becomes desolate and dreary, a place where weary pilgrims are traversing to and fro, trampling as they go upon what are to them the whitened and fleshless skeletons of dead things that once were living—Godless, homeless, because they have no home, no Father in Heaven. That, as sure as we live and God lives, is the future of the nation that has cast off its belief in God. If we would pray to live quiet lives, to take up the cross patiently and bravely that God has given us to bear, to go through this world, doing our appointed task, the

task our Father sets, and waiting the appointed end, let us hold fast the truth He has revealed to us that there is a Son in Heaven, and that the Son has said to us, When ye pray, say in My name and for My sake, and in full knowledge of all I have come to teach you, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

A LOST TEXT REGAINED.

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May, 1889.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."—Job xix., 25, 27.

THERE are probably few among us who are not familiar with the Burial Service of the Church of England. Dear as that service is to her own children, it is hardly less dear to many who do not call her mother. The exquisite simplicity and beauty of its language; its tender consolations for the living; its large and hopeful charity for the dead; its marvellous expression of every thought that might be supposed to fill the heart of the Christian mourner; its sad confessions of the briefness and the vanity of this present life, mingling with its sure and certain hopes of the life to come; its solemn deprecations of the displeasure of the Judge Eternal, and yet its assured trust in the pity of the Eternal Father; its cries of human helplessness in the presence of our last enemy, Death, alternating with its sublime defiances of that enemy in the name of Him who has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light by the resurrection from the dead—all combine to make it what it is—the common and precious heritage of all English-speaking Christians.

Whatever else in our Prayer Book men might wish to erase, or might think they could improve upon, there is no man who loves things lovely, and who prizes those

wells of English undefiled that are still left us in our Bible and Book of Common Prayer, but would desire to preserve intact this, perhaps the sweetest and purest of them all. And yet it seems that we cannot altogether so preserve it. The unlovely shadow of revision has fallen upon it, and has fallen, too, on just that portion which we would most desire to keep unchanged.

Loftiest, perhaps, amongst the defiances of death and of the grave with which this service abounds are those opening sentences of it with which the minister is bidden to greet the mourners as they draw nigh to the place where they are to lay their dead. As he meets them he is charged to speak to them those words on which the faith of Christendom has stayed itself from the hour in which they were first spoken: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And then, as it were in answer to this promise of the risen Lord, he speaks for them the words that utter the challenge of the Christian in the face of death: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

Those who have listened in the hour of their sorrow to these words know how they fall upon the ear like the solemn music of some stately funeral march fraught with dear and sad, yet glorious and sustaining memories. The farewells of the dying, the lamentations for the dead, the broken words of resignation in which mourners sob out their submission to the Father's will, seem to mingle with the hymns of confessors and the psalms of martyrs

and the far-off songs of the multitude of redeemed ones who have passed beyond the shadow of our night into the brightness of the eternal day; and so, with firmer step and calmer mien, we follow our dead to their last resting-place, and we in our turn take up the Church's song of triumph over death, as we, too, say, though with quivering lips and faltering voice, "We know that our Redeemer liveth."

And now we are told that we must say these words no more. They are a mis-translation. These are not, we are assured, the words which the inspired writer placed on the lips of him whom we have hitherto supposed to have uttered them. The passage, as it stands in the Revised Version, runs thus:—"I know that my redeemer (or vindicator) liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God."

That is to say, that Job is here only expressing his firm belief that, spite of all he has suffered, spite of the terrible ravages that disease has wrought in his body, an avenger or deliverer will come for him, and that from his flesh, that is from out of the healed and restored flesh of his living body, he should see God—the God whom he had once known as his loving and gracious Father, and whom he was so to know again. Him should he see for himself with his own eyes, and not through the representations or the arguments and pleadings of another. In a word, what Job is really described as expressing is not his sure and certain hope of his resurrection after death, but his sure and certain hope of his restoration to health and happiness before his death, and that, therefore, there is in this passage no such distinct prophecy of the resurrection of the dead as we have hitherto supposed it to contain.

Is this so? And must we therefore, if we would be loyal to truth, strike out these words, even in their revised form, from our burial service?

To the first of these questions we must, I think, answer distinctly "Yes." To the second I should say, as distinctly, "No."

I. There is, it must be admitted, unanimous consent amongst Hebrew scholars that this passage, as given in the Revised Version, is correctly rendered, and that it is, therefore, certain that Job is here described as expecting not resurrection but recovery.

But even were this doubtful, there are other reasons which compel us to admit that it is hardly possible to regard this passage as, what it seems in the older version to be, a full, precise, and detailed prophecy of the resurrection from the dead. For, in the first place, it seems impossible to reconcile such a prophecy with other passages in this book, which show an utter unconsciousness, not only of the doctrine of the resurrection, but even of that of a future state. When, for instance, Job exclaims, "My life is as wind, mine eye shall no more see good. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Or when he tells us that there "is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again; but man dieth, and wasteth away; man giveth up the flesh and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down and riseth not." Or again, when we hear him say, "If I wait, the grave is mine house; I have made my bed in the darkness, I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now any hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down

to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust." When we listen to such despairing utterances as these we feel that the writer who places such words on the lips of Job could not have known, could not have represented Job as knowing, the great truth of which these utterances are so many virtual denials. Can we imagine any Christian, believing in the resurrection of the dead—and our Christian belief in the resurrection is no clearer or fuller than that which these words, as commonly interpreted, would imply—can we imagine, I say, any Christian giving utterance to words of such blank and hopeless ignorance of aught beyond the grave as those which we have quoted above? Is it possible then to suppose that he who did utter them could have known this article of the Christian faith?

Nor again would such an anticipation of one of the latest truths of revelation occurring in one of the earliest books in the Bible be at all in accordance with the analogy of all prophecy, which we know to have been a gradually dawning light, shining ever more and more until the perfect day? It would have been a strange exception to such a system of progressive revelation if such a burst of sunrise had come before the dawn. Strange indeed would it have been if to the writer of the book of Job should have been revealed a truth hidden seemingly from all the saints and prophets of the older dispensation, and yet one of such importance, one so widely and deeply affecting the faith and the life of all who held it, that had it ever formed part of one of their own sacred writings, we cannot imagine that they could have been ignorant of it or unaffected by it.

And there is besides another consideration which seems absolutely fatal to the idea that any such revelation was meant to be conveyed in these words of Job; namely,

that had it been so it would have made the whole of the book unmeaning and self-contradictory. What is the idea of the book of Job? Surely it is that of a good man tried by the mystery of suffering as existing under the government of a righteous God. Job is conscious of his integrity; no false accusations, no special pleadings of others will ever convince him that he has deserved his sufferings at the hand of God, and that they are punishments for his misdeeds. But if this be so, why is it that he, the innocent and righteous man, is thus smitten of God and afflicted? Can He who so deals with him be really a just and a loving God? This it is that all through his sufferings tries Job's soul with agony far keener than bodily pain or heart sorrow. This it is that all but maddens him into defiance of his Maker, and that does drive him into those wild cries for pity, those passionate exclamations against what seems to him the strange capriciousness of Him who thus torments him, which break from him again and again like the groans of a sick man, which he is loth to give way to and yet cannot suppress.

Surely if Job had all along known the truth of the resurrection; if he had believed that in another world his Father would requite him for all his sufferings; would give him another, a more perfect, a happier life; would in that render him double for all that he had lost and all that he had suffered in this life, he could not thus have expressed himself. All his difficulty would have vanished. No longer could he have been tempted to regard the Father, whose purpose for him was thus manifestly all love, as the seemingly capricious or cruel tyrant who was causelessly afflicting him. Surely it is just because Job does not know this, just because all that he does know is this present life that seems for him to be about to end

in sorrow and misery and with no hope beyond, that he is thus sore distressed.

Strictly in accordance too with the idea of the whole book of Job—as that of one face to face with the great problem of evil, unrelieved by any prospect of a future or a better life and striving in spite of this to retain his trust in God—are the concluding utterances of the book, wherein the Lord in whom he is striving to trust, appears upon the scene to speak the last concluding word, which shall silence alike the passionate appeals of Job and the ill-judged reasonings of his friends. In all those Divine utterances there is not so much as one word that speaks of a future life in which Job shall be requited for his sufferings in this; not one gleam of light is shed upon the dark mystery of present evil under the government of an almighty and yet a just God. The voice from out of the whirlwind is all of power, and of power alone. It is a challenge to the creature to compete, if he can, in wisdom and power with the Creator, and if he cannot, to lay his hand upon his mouth and to submit. Canst thou do this and this? Knowest thou this? Canst thou understand that? And if thou canst not, and if thou dost not; if the whole material world in which thou findest thyself is all to thee a great unfathomable mystery, then be silent, endure, perish even, if thou must perish; but ask me not to tell thee why I thus deal with thee. Suffer and be still. To the last the book is thus true to its own idea. To the last the servant of the Lord is to be seen tried with the doubt, Is my Lord just and good as well as great? And to the last that question is left unanswered, in order that his faith may come forth as pure gold from the fire, that searching him through and through purifies but cannot destroy it. Is it possible then that it could have entered into the conception of the inspired writer of

such a drama as this, to describe its hero as having received from God, by special and exceptional revelation, just that very knowledge which would have made the trial of his faith no trial, and would have made the awful mystery which perplexes him clear as the day? The idea of such a revelation, made in such a way, under such circumstances, is—apart from all other objections to it—a dramatic impossibility. It might have been, it must have been, a supernatural revelation; but it would have been also an unnatural one. And in all the supernatural in Scripture there is nothing unnatural. For these reasons, then, we hold that the revisers of our Authorised Version here, at any rate, are right, and that the words of Job must henceforth be read as they render them to us, and the hope of Job be henceforth held to be of this life and not of the next.

II. But when we have admitted this, must we go further, and admit that in these words there is no prophecy of the resurrection or of an after life? With the old words, is the old hope they proclaimed gone too, and must their place in our Burial Service, like the place of the departed, know them no more for ever?

The answer to this question depends entirely on what meaning we assign to the word prophecy. If by that word we mean merely and strictly verbal prediction, merely the foretelling, in so many distinct and precise words, so many distinct and precise events, then doubtless these words are for us no longer words of prophecy. What Job distinctly and precisely foretold for himself is described as having as distinctly come to pass. His vindicator did appear, he did stand beside him at the last, he did do him exactly the justice that he claimed. Job did in his natural flesh see his gracious and loving Father.

There in its fulfilment ends the prophecy. It was for him and him alone, and not for us—a thing not of the future but of the past.

But is this idea of prophecy the true one? Is there no foreshowing of the future save in words only? Is there no such thing as prophecy in events, in persons, in history itself? Is there no such thing as a plan, a purpose in all human history—a working out in time of one deep counsel laid from all eternity—a divinely ordered evolution of humanity, according to which the race tends ever onwards, upwards to its complete perfection? Is there, or is there not, presented to us in Scripture—viewed not in detached and scattered fragments of books or of texts, but viewed as a whole—one great idea slowly working itself out in many ways—the bringing of good out of evil; the deliverance of the creature, made subject to vanity, but in hope; the redemption of a creation groaning and travailing together in bondage, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; the *dénouement*, if we may so dare to speak, of the great mysterious drama of life in the justifying of the ways of the hidden Father, through the work of the redeeming Son and the sanctifying Spirit? If there be—if this be the central idea, the ground-plan of the whole structure of human history, viewed in the revealing light of the inspired word, then ought we not to expect that this history should be itself a prophecy—that it should ever be foreshowing its own future, as it ever strives to become, as it in some measure does become, that which it is yet to be? Just as science tells us that each order in creation—each successive type in the long evolution of living creatures—gives, in some rudimentary organ or function, its mute mysterious prophecy of the higher type that is to follow it; so that each type is at once a prophecy and a fulfilment of a prophecy,

an accomplishment of a past foreshadowing, a foreshadowing of a coming future—so in the slow evolution of redeemed humanity, all along its course, there may be seen like tokens and prophecies of its completion; prophecies all the more real, because they are not read in words, but in facts and events; profound analogies, marvellous correspondences between what has been and what is, and again between what is and what we are told is yet to be; successive and ever clearer indications of the one great design that runs through all the ages; prophecies, as the buds are of the spring—as the flowers are of the summer —as the dawn is of the sunrise; prophecies which are, therefore, a far weightier evidence for Christianity than any number of merely verbal predictions, because they are predictions which could not possibly have been interpolations of later date, made to fit the events after they had occurred; prophecies entirely free from questions of dates, or authorship of books, or verbal niceties of translation, because they are interwoven through the whole structure of the sacred books—nay, throughout the whole structure of human history—of human life itself—which they illustrate and explain. As the cross in the ground-plan of some great cathedral shows that its idea from the first must have been Christian, whereas the external cross placed upon it might have been but the afterthought of later builders; so this prophetic structure of all sacred history is in itself a far greater, a far more certain word of prophecy than any single word or words of this or that individual prophet.

Let us, then, try if we can discern any prophecy of this kind in the book of Job, and more especially in those words of his with which we are now dealing.

In the first place, then, we can see that the story of Job is just what we have supposed the whole story of our

race on earth to be—a great drama, working out one great idea. Its opening chapter brings, as it were, on the stage before us—with all the boldness and freedom of some old mystery play—the great central idea of all religions, man contended for by the two opposing powers of good and evil. God is there, and Satan, and between these the free will and choice of man. And the idea of the drama is that of man making his choice for good and for God, and what comes of that choice. And then—the prologue, as it were, of the drama having been spoken—the supernatural vanishes from the scene. Heaven and hell are no longer there; earth only remains, and man upon it as we know him, child apparently of the earth only, engaged in that struggle for existence in which all earthly creatures are engaged; but striving also, as he alone can, to understand why he must thus strive; forced by those terrible pedagogues, pain and sorrow, to the study of the great enigma: "Why am I what I am? why is it that I suffer and sorrow thus?" and this with the added difficulty of the belief in a God,—the belief, that is to say, in a just and righteous, a perfectly just and righteous ruler of all men, who is also the author of that system of things in which righteous men, His servants, His children, are the seemingly helpless, unregarded victims of those terrible, pitiless laws of nature to which they are subject, which are nevertheless His laws, and to which He has subjected them.

This is the great enigma of life—insoluble, hopelessly insoluble, if there be no future life in which the righteous sufferer may be recompensed for all that he has suffered in this. For if there be no other life than this, then assuredly God who rules it would seem to be either unjust or impotent; unjust if He will not, impotent if He cannot, prevent the sufferings of righteous men. And this was

the trial, in all its terrible intensity, to which the faith of Job was exposed, and from out of which it emerges triumphant, not because it can justify itself to his reason, but because—spite of all that reason can allege to the contrary, spite of all those terrible facts of nature and of life which seem to disprove it—his spiritual being, that in him which is supernatural, which rises still above the things of time and sense, refuses to believe that He who made it conscious of right and wrong, loving justice and hating injustice, can Himself be aught save just.

So it is that this righteous man, holding fast to his own integrity, and therefore holding fast to the righteousness of Him who made him righteous, declares his conviction that there must be for him an avenger; that at the end of his trial there must be deliverance; and that at the last he shall see for himself the righteous, loving Father, whom he believes his God to be. And then, when his faith, thus proved to the uttermost, triumphs, then, but not till then, comes the deliverance he hoped for. The supernatural appears once more on the scene of the natural. No longer do we behold the man, the mere unpitied victim of the forces of nature. God, the Creator and the Ruler of nature, is seen to interfere for the deliverance of His afflicted servant. Health is restored to him, and wealth and happiness, in larger measure than ever. The Lord renders to him double for all that He had done to him. His redeemer has come, has taken his stand beside him upon earth; he has in his flesh seen God, and knows him to be good and just as well as great.

The idea, then, of this book of Job would seem to be this: *That the justice of God is pledged for the happiness of His servants;* that He has not left them, as He seems to

have done, the sport and the prey of the physical forces of that material universe in which He has placed them; that more precious in His sight is one loving, trusting human soul than all the universe of material worlds and all the laws that govern them; that sooner than that one righteous soul should unjustly suffer, those laws should—all of them, if need were—be suspended; that full surely there will come for every soul that trusts the Father's love a deliverance wrought by the Father's power.

And now let us turn from this dramatic story of the suffering, temptation and final deliverance of a righteous servant of God, to contemplate two other dramas, one still unfinished, the other, like that of Job, finished and complete.

The unfinished drama is the history of our race. The life of humanity on earth is exactly typified by all that part of the drama of Job's life which lies between its prologue and its epilogue, between its supernatural beginning and its supernatural ending. Through all that long story of a man—full, as it is, of tragic interest—what is the very sorest trial to which it ever has been subjected, to which it still is and always must be subject? It is not merely the calamities, the sorrows of life, which come to all, but it is the added suffering of the mystery of these sorrows. It is the thought of the apparent carelessness and capriciousness with which the joys and the pains of existence seem to be scattered among the children of the common Father. It is that suffering in this life seems to be neither penal nor yet remedial, but seems to come as the rains of heaven fall and the winds blow, on just and unjust alike. It is that there is so much apparent waste and gratuitous suffering; so much purely useless and purposeless agony. It

is that human lives seem wasted by myriads, poured out on the earth like water, unregarded seemingly, unpitied, unaided, unrequited. Suffering humanity, wherever it still retains its faith in a divine Lord and Ruler, is still haunted by this question, "Why is it thus with us?" Like Job, too, it has been sorely vexed by false comforters, would-be friends who preach and lecture and rebuke and exhort, but who cannot console, because they cannot solve that enigma with which every sufferer finds himself confronted: "Why, if God is good and just, does He thus afflict me?" Surely the analogy is perfect here. Humanity seems to have still the old choice presented to it: to curse God and die; or to die believing in and blessing Him, and yet with a thousand reasons why it should not believe in, why it should not bless nor praise the Being who thus seems causelessly afflicting it. And the message—the inspired message of this type of our race to all who strive to believe in a Father, though they have no visible and sensible proof of a Father's love—is this: "Believe as I did, although such proof be lacking. Believe as I did, spite of all the seeming disproof that you see and feel. Believe that God is your Father; believe that He will—nay, must, because He is your righteous Father—do for you what He has done for me. Believe that for you, too, there is an avenger; one who will yet give you victory over all that now afflicts you. Believe that you shall yet see for yourselves the loving Father who is hidden from you now. Believe that a day is coming for you when you will discover that there was a need for all you mourn under; when you will receive from your Father double for all that He has done unto you."

But then in answer to this message, echoed and re-echoed as it is from psalmist and from prophet through all that elder dispensation, when loving, trustful souls still

loved and trusted on though all around was darkness that might be felt, the question still arises, *Is this message true?* What ground had these suffering saints and prophets for the hope they thus so firmly cherished? What proof have we who suffer now and who see thousands around us suffering without any just cause, without any assignable reason even—what proof have we that all shall be made right at last? The drama of the patriarch's life was complete; ours is unfinished, incomplete. No avenger stands beside the poor, the wronged, the oppressed; no healer and helper beside the sick and the dying. Graves are closing day after day over those whose lives have been the strangest, saddest mysteries of suffering, and they seem to have had no redeemer, no deliverer. With their eyes in the flesh they have never seen a just or merciful and loving Father. And assuredly if this were all we knew the question would be answerless. Assuredly if in this life only we have hope, we who believe in God must be of all men most miserable, miserable above all others for this reason, that a sense of cruel injustice would envenom all those sufferings which we share with others; a bitter sense that if we have a Father, He has forsaken us and regards us not. At best the hope of the patriarch could be for us but a pious opinion, a hope against hope, not impossible—for is not our Father almighty as well as just?—but difficult, sadly, terribly difficult to hold fast in the presence of all that seems so utterly to refute it. For the belief in a future state rests mainly upon faith in the justice of God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is still the cry of the soul, which from its own righteousness infers the righteousness of Him who has created it. But if this life be all that He has given us to live, then assuredly He is not seen to be just, for in this life "we see the ungodly in

such prosperity," the godly in such adversity, that "our faith is well-nigh gone, our treadings well-nigh slip." We cannot see the Father, nay, we cannot see the righteous Ruler and Judge of men, in a world where happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, seem to be distributed by no rule of right, but showered rather at random upon each as he chances to come within their range, distressing us with their capricious and mechanical incidence, and forcing us to ask, Is there no moral government of this universe, in which the wicked flourish as a green bay-tree, and the righteous perish and no man regardeth, and chance or fate seems Lord of all?

Against this reasoning of despair it is that men in all ages have set faith in a future state—the belief that life in this world is an unaccomplished drama, the completion of which is to be found in another life and another world, where men shall be dealt with according to the deeds done in this; where happiness and misery shall be, as we instinctively feel they ought to be, the result of what men are, and not the accident of when and where they happen to be; where Lazarus shall have good things and Dives evil things; where each shall go to his own place, the place which is fitted for him, and for which he has fitted himself; where man and his environment shall be no longer at war; where God shall be seen to be not only all-powerful, but all good and just. But, as I have said, apart from revelation, without the light which it throws upon the gloomy confusion of this present life, this hope, this faith, is at best but the struggle of the soul with the things of sense and time, the protest of our moral nature against its unmoral surroundings. It is a hope, which in our brightest moments rises into certainty, in our dark ones sinks into doubt and all but into denial. It is a faith which as it wanes and sickens almost unto

death has but the strength to cry, Oh, that there were a "daysman" who could lay his hands upon God and upon us; one who, nearer to God than man, could speak for God to man as no mere man can do; one who, drawing nigh to men, suffering as men suffer, tried as men are tried, can plead for them with God; who, being man with God and God with man, shall show us what He alone can show, the meaning of this life of ours, in which God seems so far off, and show Himself at once the life and the light of men.

The cry of the patriarch is the utterance of the desire of humanity. But it is more; it is a prophecy; it points forward to the completed drama of another life, in which once more appears, as in this older drama, the supernatural controlling the natural. Once more we see, behind the veil of the material and the visible, the Divine power that rules and over-rules all things for good. We see once more a righteous sufferer, holy, harmless, undefiled, whose whole life was spent in absolutely perfect submission to the will of his Father in Heaven, and who was yet a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and whose sorest sorrow and whose deepest grief sprang from the intensity of His sympathy with His sorrowing and suffering fellow-men. We see Him rejected, despised, hated of those He loved so well, dying at last a death of shame and agony, which was regarded by those who inflicted it as the just punishment for offences against the laws of His country and His God, and we hear from Him in the moment of His supremest agony just that appeal to the justice and to the love of God which suffering has wrung from the hearts of the righteous sufferer in all ages: "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

And as we contemplate this life, this death, we see that which, if this life be all, if there be no hereafter,

would constitute the most terrible disproof of the existence of a just God and loving Father of men; and then—as in the older story of the righteous servant, tried, afflicted, seemingly forsaken, but all the while guarded, guided, sustained by love that never ceases and power that never fails—we see a miraculous deliverance. We see that death itself may not frustrate the justice, nor the grave shut out the love of God. We see Him, the just, the holy one, proclaimed to be the righteous Son of God by the resurrection of the dead. We see Him, too, receiving at the hand of the Lord double for all that He had suffered. We see Him who, "though He was a Son," had to "learn obedience" by things that He suffered, rewarded for His suffering by glory and honour and power; by that glory which He most desired, and by that power which must for Him have been most infinitely precious—the glory of having conquered death for all men; the power of delivering humanity from the miseries of this sinful life. We see Him whom Job in his suffering typified; we see Him whom Job in his prophetic anticipation of his deliverance foretold; the redeemer, who lives and lives for ever—the true avenger of all righteous sufferers—standing upon this earth, revealing to all men the righteous God, the loving Father in whom, hoping against hope, believing, in spite of doubt, they had still trusted even though He slew them. We hear Him say to all who are weary and heavy laden—weary with the burden of life, heavy laden with the intolerable weight of doubt that life, uncheered by the hope of immortality, must ever lay upon the souls of the righteous—"Come unto me and find rest for your souls. See in me, your risen Lord and Saviour, the answer to that terrible question which has haunted the souls of all who have striven to believe in a righteous God in spite of

the seemingly unrighteous rule which left them seemingly unpitied to suffer and to die. See in me the proof that God cares for the souls of the righteous, and that none that trust in Him shall ever perish." "I am the Resurrection and the Life," saith the Lord: "he that liveth and believeth in me, though he was dead, yet shall he live."

As we hear these words of our risen Lord we learn how deep, how true, was the prophecy that lay hidden in those words which follow them in our funeral hymn of triumph over death. We do not need to throw ourselves back into the time of him who first uttered them and try to reason out of them a verbal prediction of our Redeemer. We need but to read these words in the light of the Easter dawn that flashes out from the unsealed tomb of Christ to see in them, not a verbal prediction, but a typical foreshadowing of the great fact that our Redeemer liveth. The pillar of cloudlike hope turns, as we thus gaze upon it, into a pillar of fire, to lead us through the night of our pilgrimage. The old words of faith and hope are ours once more, but ours with a thousandfold deeper meaning than they had for him who spoke them first. We speak the words which he spoke of defiant faith in the presence of our great enemy, death; but we speak them with a more assured certainty, for as we utter them there glides into his place another sufferer—there speaks in his stead another tried and tempted and triumphant one. We see the "daysman" for whom the patriarch sighed and sighed in vain; and we hear from Him how that He has destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light—a life and immortality that shall be ours, too, if we will trust in Him. We hear, too, that other word of prophecy—the voice from Heaven echoing the voice of our Redeemer on earth. "Write, blessed are the dead that

die in the Lord from henceforth, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." And—as we listen to the promise and the prophecy—the old familiar answer rises to our lips once more, "We know that our Redeemer liveth;" "We know that at the last He shall stand upon the earth;" "We know that in our flesh we shall see God."

FIRST PASTORAL CHARGE.

FIRST PASTORAL CHARGE,

DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY AND CHURCHWARDENS OF THE DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH, OCTOBER, 1872.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,

THE anxious sense of responsibility under which a Bishop proceeds to deliver his primary Charge is lightened for me by the reflection that we do not meet as strangers. That we might not so meet I have delayed this my first visitation until the latest possible moment. I felt that, before attempting to speak to you those words of exhortation or counsel which you expect to hear on such an occasion, I ought first to acquaint myself thoroughly with the circumstances of the Diocese over which, in God's providence, I have been called to preside. I ought to know, not merely from the study of Diocesan returns and reports, but with the personal knowledge that could only come from overseeing and sharing in your labours, what were the special conditions under which you are called to exercise your ministry, what were your special helps and hindrances, what things amongst us specially needed to be strengthened or set in order, what to be amended or restrained.

I wished, moreover, to win for my words such acceptance with you as might come from your conviction that I had, at least, honestly striven to attain this knowledge of yourselves and of your work. I wished that, when I should speak to you of the high aims and awful respon-

sibilities of your office, I might speak as one who you knew had learned as your fellow labourer something too of its trials and its difficulties; and, that, when I should speak to you of any aims or plans of mine as regards my own work amongst you, I might speak, not as one who was producing untested theories which better acquaintance with the Diocese might correct or refute, but as one whose aims had, by your help, been not only tested, but even in some measure successfully wrought out.

I am thankful to know that in one respect, at least, these expectations have been more than realised. Whatever may have been my shortcomings in fulfilling amongst you even my own ideal of the office and work of a Bishop, I have found, on your part, no lack of help towards accomplishing it. All the aid and encouragement that the kindest and most trustful of welcomes, the heartiest and most loyal co-operation in work and in council could give, I have received at the hands both of the clergy and of the laity of this Diocese, from the hour when I first entered it a stranger to almost every one in it, until this moment when I can look around me and find in every part of it those whom I have learned to esteem very highly and love for the sake of their work, and for the help and encouragement that they have given me in mine.

And I am bound to acknowledge, as I do most thankfully, that this co-operation has been rendered me alike by clergy and laity of all Church parties amongst us. In all attempts that I have as yet made to draw you together in any common work for the Church in this Diocese, it has been my happiness to find myself surrounded by earnest and devoted men of all schools of thought in our Church, who have shewn, and who may even have more deeply learned by such united efforts, that within the

broad limits which our Church has traced for her children, if there be ample room for divergence, there is even ampler room for loving and brotherly co-operation. To be the centre of all such united and uniting labours, to draw together more and more the severed ranks of those who, spite of all their differences, are still fellow soldiers and fellow servants of the same Lord, is one of the greatest privileges, as it should be one of the most earnest aims, of a Bishop. But how far he shall succeed in so doing depends quite as much upon his clergy as upon himself. It rests with you, my Rev. Brethren, perhaps even more than with me, to say how far this Diocese shall find in its Bishop, not merely the legal overseer of so many individual Clergymen, but the leader of a united band of Brethren.

The fact that we have thus worked together for nearly four years warrants my laying before you with some confidence my impressions as to the state of Church life and work in this Diocese.

That the experience of these four years should have impressed me with a painful sense of how much yet needs to be done, how much there is not even yet attempted, how far beyond anything we have yet attained to is the true standard of our life and work, is only what all earnest work for God must teach us one and all. Nevertheless I should be unjust alike to you and to those who have preceded me in my office here, if I were not to say that I am quite as deeply impressed, not only with the sense of how much has been and is being done amongst you, but of how great are our powers and opportunities for effecting all that yet remains to be done.

Here, as everywhere else, the Church is to be seen, aroused from the cold lethargy of the last century, gird-

ing herself resolutely and penitently to her two-fold task—the redeeming, so far as may be, of the arrears of a too slothful past; the providing for the urgent needs of the present. Tied and bound as she has been, and still in large measure is, by that weighty chain of cause and effect which links old sins and neglects with present difficulties and dangers, the pitifulness of God's great mercy is visibly loosing her, is filling her once more with an ever deepening sense of the greatness of her mission and with strength to accomplish it. Zeal and devotion are fast replacing sloth and formalism. The ministry of Christ's Church is more and more felt to be, what its name implies, service,—the most honourable and yet the most laborious of all services, wherein they who labour are the servants of men for Christ's sake. The parish is regarded no longer as a mere living, a *beneficium*, yielding certain assured profits to its fortunate possessor with the condition attached of certain light routine duties which may be done by a hired and ill-paid deputy. It is more and more felt to be a trust, the most solemn and awful of all trusts, even "the cure and government of the souls" of men, of which account must be given in the great day of judgment. The Church is no longer the profession into which the clergy enter at their ordination, but the fellowship and communion of the faithful, into which laity and clergy alike enter at their baptism, and in which they have each their respective rights and their respective duties too. Under the influence of convictions such as these, the abuses of the past are rapidly vanishing. The pluralists, the sinecurists, the absentee parsons are becoming things of the past, and those who succeed these are, for the most part, conscientious and diligent pastors, who are setting themselves, with care and pains, to build up again the waste places left them by their predecessors.

I do not say,—would that I could say !—that this is the case in every parish in this Diocese; that we have not our share of relics of the past; that we have no neglected parishes, no slothful or incompetent pastors. There are such. There are parishes amongst us which are the disgrace of the Diocese and the despair of the Bishop: clergymen who neither do their duty nor allow any one else to do it for them; who strain to the utmost those legal rights of our parochial system which were designed to protect the clergyman *in* his work, and not *from* it, and who contrive by virtue of these to make, in spite of parishioners or Bishop, their parishes very Gideon's fleeces, dry as summer dust, while all around them may be watered with the dews of reviving life. There are such to be seen amongst us; just as on the other hand, there are to be seen amongst the laity, patrons who still regard the preferment they possess not as a trust to provide a fitting pastor for immortal souls, but as a marketable piece of property to be sold to the highest bidder, or bestowed on their nearest or neediest relative. Nevertheless I can honestly testify that these are the exceptions, not the rule; that they are reprobated by the general conscience of the Diocese and are passing away with the passing generation. The standard both of zeal and efficiency on the part of the clergy, even their enemies being judges, and the standard of conscientious responsibility on the part of patrons, probably never stood higher than they do now; and these have been, and could only have been, thus raised by the higher aims and more earnest efforts of the clergy themselves.

And it is another token for good, that this higher standard of clerical life and work is not only to be seen in our large towns, where the quickened tide of all public

life, the rivalry of the sects, the full blaze of publicity both for encouragement and for criticism, the sympathy and counsel of many fellow labourers, and above all the crying needs of the masses are ever stimulating the clergy to greater efforts, but in the small country parishes with which this Diocese abounds, where the pastor leads, under all the depressing influences of a contracted sphere of work, a scanty population, a poor and illiterate congregation, the comparatively obscure and uneventful life of a country parson. Here, where the temptations to indolence or despondency are strongest, are to be found, as I well know, some of the brightest and happiest instances of diligent and successful pastoral work.

More encouraging, however, even than the sight of such labours as these is the marked and even rapid success which in so many instances seems to attend them. Few things have struck me more, during the four years in which I have watched the work of this Diocese, than the power which one devoted parish priest, throwing himself heartily into the parochial system of our Church, possesses for the renovation of his parish. In more than one instance have I been permitted to see the remarkable change which passes over some long neglected parish, when once the people have come to recognize in their new pastor one who really cares for their souls. How soon, in such a case, are those who have been alienated by indifference won back by love! How soon do the restored church, the frequent and hearty services, house to house visitation, earnest and faithful (it need not be able or eloquent) preaching, coming from the heart of the preacher and going straight to the heart of the hearer, gather back the scattered flock that had forsaken the Church of their fathers, only because she seemed to have forsaken them! Great, indeed, for good or for evil, is the

power possessed by the English parish priest. It may be doubted whether there is at this moment anything at all comparable to it in Christendom. Certainly there is nothing like it in our own country. No priesthood, no ministry amongst us possesses anything like the same opportunities for good, the same real influence with all classes, as that which belongs to the clergy of our Church if they will but use it as they might.

How far we in this Diocese are rightly using the powers and opportunities which are still ours, we may ascertain for ourselves by certain practical tests, to which I now proceed to invite your attention.

Residence of the Clergy.

And first, and most obvious of these, is the extent to which the beneficed clergy are resident in their cures. A non-resident incumbent is a contradiction in terms. An incumbent is one "qui incumbit operi," who gives himself to the work of his ministry; and that work is one which no pastor can perform by deputy. To him, and not to any other, is entrusted the cure of souls in his parish, with all of pastoral care, of personal watchfulness and diligence which these awful words imply. The income arising from his benefice is in no sense his property, it is the spiritual trust fund of the parish, in which he has only a life interest conditioned on his performance of all the duties of the trust. To take, therefore, the greater part of this income, and entirely to absent himself from the performance of these duties, is a breach of trust, which is not in the least condoned by his providing out of the remainder of the fund for a curate, who cannot be to the parishioners all that the incumbent ought to be, and who, if he could, ought to receive all the income arising from the trust fund.

On this point there is happily very little to be desired amongst us. The number of clergy in this Diocese non-

resident and not performing their duty, either from ill-health or any other cause, amounts only to thirty-three. Of these ten are exempt from residence under the provisions of the Pluralities Act; having been inducted before the year 1836. One only, I am thankful to say, is absent by reason of sequestration; and the remaining twenty-two are absent, by licence from myself, mostly on account of ill-health.

On this latter reason for absence I wish to say a few words, which will not, I trust, be taken amiss.

The law of our Church permits to the incumbent, in addition to the three months' absence to which he is entitled without licence, such other temporary absence with licence, for good and sufficient cause, as should in reason be granted to the members of any public service; but neither the law of our Church, nor the moral obligations of the case permit of permanent absence on the score of ill-health. The bodily infirmity of an incumbent which unfits him for the more active duties of his parish does not necessarily unfit him for guiding and governing, as he often most usefully can, his curates and his parishioners. If, on the other hand, the state of his health be such as to require permanent residence in some other locality, or if he feel that the time has come when even the superintendence of his parish might better be intrusted to younger and more vigorous hands, the law now permits of what until lately was impossible, his retiring upon a pension.

The principle of this law is manifestly a just one. It is simply that principle which happily is more and more influencing our Church legislation, namely, that a living, like every other public office, is not a freehold but a trust, held only on condition of the discharge of important duties; that, accordingly, considerations of the efficiency

of the service, that is to say of the interests involved in the trust, must outweigh those of the individual; and that, therefore, for incumbents or for Bishops, just as for the officer or the Civil servant, there should be the alternative of efficient performance of duty, or just and considerate superannuation. Whether the terms of this retirement for clergymen are sufficiently just and considerate; whether, for instance, in the case of small incumbencies, the retiring pension should not be one-half instead of one-third of the whole income; whether, in every instance, the retiring incumbent should be required to forsake the house endeared to him by the memories of long years of residence, are questions deserving of serious consideration,—as is also the question how this superannuation may be supplemented in the cases, and they are many, of livings too small to provide both a sufficient pension for the retiring clergyman and a sufficient income for his successor. Such cases, in my opinion, ought to be met by a Parochial, or better still, by a Diocesan Superannuation Fund. Certainly, until some such provision be forthcoming, the Act should not be made, as some have proposed to make it, compulsory, I cannot but hope, however, that now that the principle of retirement is established as against the incumbent and in favour of the parishioners, they will on their part recognise the corresponding principle of lay provision for superannuation; or, in other words, that wherever the original spiritual trust fund of a parish is clearly insufficient to provide a retiring pension, it may be supplemented from the same source from which the fund itself originally came—the gifts of the faithful laity.

Superannuation Fund.

Next to the residence of the clergy, the condition of their churches may be regarded as a fair test of the state

Church Restoration.

of Church life in any Diocese. As are the worshippers, such as a rule will be the place in which they worship. The parish church in half ruinous decay, the church-yard neglected and filthy, tell their own tale of a corresponding neglect and spiritual decay of the pastor or people, or of both. There can be but little fear of God, or love for His service, where His house is the worst cared for in the parish. Or, again, the church—not in a state of decay, but in a state of most solid and irreverent comfort, hideous with square pews, where selfish respectability ensconces itself and thrusts God's poor into remote and dark corners; the church where the holy table, duly provided with lolling cushions for the elbows of the infrequent celebrant, is hidden from the eyes of the congregation by a towering pile of carpentry, which lifts into prominence the person of the minister who preaches his part of the prayers to the people, and that of the clerk who says their part instead of them—tells its tale of worshippers, whose highest idea of worship is that of their own edification, and for whom their place of worship is, therefore, not so much God's house, to be made beautiful in His honour, as man's house, to be made respectable for his credit and comfortable for his convenience. But the church—cleansed of these irreverent and selfish disfigurements, restored to the original beauty of a design conceived when men built churches not for man's convenience but for God's glory, free from porch to holy table for rich and poor alike, adorned with the loving, nay, the lavish gifts of devout and loving hearts—tells its tale likewise. It tells us of worshippers who are being taught, were it only by the mute witness of the place where they assemble, what the true worship of the sanctuary is; that it is something more than the hearing of prayers and sermons, something more even than real prayer and praise; that it

is the assembling of Christ's people, to win by such gathering in His name His promised presence in their midst: a presence which makes the place where it is vouchsafed, the house of God, the holy house which they who own that presence love to make beautiful, as the place wherein His honour dwells.

Judged by this test we have much to be thankful for. You know how largely and how rapidly the work of church restoration has progressed in this Diocese. Begun within the memory of many now living, it has spread all over a Diocese in which the number of large and beautiful churches is so great as to make church restoration at once most extensive and costly; and in which, nevertheless, the greater number of our churches have been admirably restored, and that, too, in cases where the paucity or the poverty of the parishioners, and the absence of any resident squire, must have made the work at first appear almost hopeless. Too much praise cannot be given to those who, in spite of such local difficulties, have brought, as so many have brought, their church restoration to a successful issue.

The total number of churches restored or rebuilt, since the date of my consecration, has been eighty-two, at a cost of voluntary contributions, as nearly as I can ascertain, of £109,000.

Church Building.

Of church building, as distinguished from church restoration, there is not so much to be said in a Diocese in which there are few of those great and growing centres of population which so overtax the energies of the Church in other parts of the country. Only in three of our towns, Leicester, Northampton, and Wellingborough, is there at this moment any very pressing need for new churches. In Leicester, with its population of nearly 100,000 souls,

the need has been sorely felt. It is, however, I am happy to say, being to a great degree overtaken. Within the last ten years, during which the population of Leicester has increased from 69,000 to very nearly 100,000, four new churches have been built and districts attached to them, and a fifth will soon be completed. One of these, the beautiful church of St. Mark's, complete in all its fittings, and with the addition of an admirable parsonage, was the munificent gift of two devoted members of our Church, whose names will long live in the grateful memory of Leicester Churchmen.* The total amount of additional church accommodation thus provided in Leicester amounts to 3,600 sittings, all of them happily free. The population of the new parishes thus created numbers 32,000. The total cost of these churches, including the value of sites either purchased or given, amounts to nearly £40,000.

Northampton, with its smaller population of 43,000 souls, is relatively better supplied with churches. One new church, St. James', has recently been built and endowed, and its district assigned in a poor and populous suburb. The parish of St. Edmund, with its present population of 11,000 souls rapidly increasing, greatly needs at least one new church, and will, I trust, ere long obtain it. Meanwhile, by the liberality of Churchmen in the town and county of Northampton, an iron mission church has been procured, and provision has been made for the services, for three years, of two mission clergymen, whose labours, spite of most unforeseen and deplorable difficulties and hindrances, I trust yet to see bearing good fruit. In Wellingborough, the population of which has increased 50 per cent. since the last census, and is still

* William Perry Herrick, Esq., of Beaumanor, and his sister, the late Miss Herrick.

rapidly increasing, one new church has been built, and a second is needed, which I fully hope and expect soon to see built. On this subject of church building I cannot help expressing a doubt whether we, in this Diocese, are not still too much disposed to make the building of a large and handsome church and the endowment of a district the beginning and not the end of our church extension. The living ministry and the living church that it may gather around it should and might easily precede the material fabric. Far better is it that the spiritual wants of some growing neighbourhood should be met in the first instance by the roughest and readiest contrivances we can devise at the moment, than that they should be left unsupplied until we have provided ourselves with the latest and most improved parochial machinery. Far better that the congregation, gathered it may be at first in some hired room, should swarm out into the school house and wait eagerly for the parish church, than that the parish church should be built in its completeness and then wait more than half empty for the congregation yet to be gathered into it.

Fabric Funds and Parochial Trusts.

Our new and restored churches, however, suggest one very serious practical consideration, namely, the preservation of their fabrics. If the work that we have done in this generation is not to be all done over again, with like cost and effort a century hence, some means must be devised for preserving our churches from falling into the decay in which we found them. The abolition of church rates, on the ground that our church was not a national institution, by those who are now claiming possession of all church property on the ground that it is a national institution, throws on Churchmen alone the preservation both of churchyard and of church. The attempt to do

this by a voluntary rate must in the long run prove a failure. A voluntary rate will last just so long as each individual assessed under it pays his share. It will be repudiated by all so soon as any are called on to pay their own share and that of certain defaulters besides. Sooner or later, therefore, the voluntary rate will fail us as a reliable source of income. And this again suggests the idea of Parochial or Diocesan Trust Funds, for the institution of which a legal machinery now exists. Such funds might be commenced by an annual or quarterly offertory in each parish, and would, it is to be hoped, be from time to time augmented by the gifts and bequests of pious donors. Only in some such way as this, I am convinced, can we make secure provision, not only for the maintenance of our church fabrics, but even for the annual expenses of divine worship.

Weekly Offertory.

The whole subject, indeed, of parochial and diocesan finance is one that requires careful consideration, and it is one on which I hope to have the advice of our Diocesan Conference. One thing, however, I can even now confidently say; that church finance, whether diocesan or parochial, can never be in a satisfactory state so long as it is not based in some measure on the weekly offertory. So long as we neglect the simplest and easiest, as well as most Scriptural mode of collecting the contributions both of poor and rich; so long as we depend solely on the spasmodic impulses of the "eloquent appeal" of the charity sermon, or the mute importunity of the subscription list; so long our income for Church purposes will be as irregular and as unreliable as the means we take to raise it. Happily the absurd prejudice which associated the weekly offertory with Popery is dying out. A clergyman may now, in most cases, venture to obey the direc-

tions of his Church, by reading a few sentences from Scripture while his people give their alms, without being accused of wishing thereby, in some mysterious way, to lead his flock to Rome. Of course I do not counsel the sudden revival of the offertory in any case where such prejudices still exist, nor, indeed, in any case without previous consultation with the parishioners, still less without what should always accompany it, a full publication of all parochial accounts. But I do advise all of you to put before your people the obvious fitness and advantages of this weekly almsgiving, and to introduce it in every case in which you are satisfied that it may be introduced without any violent shock to their feelings. I am persuaded that if you do this, you will find your parishioners not unreasonable in this matter, and that the time has therefore come when, with very general consent, we might attempt the revival of the weekly offertory.

Daily Service.

Church restoration and church building, however, are but means to an end. A far more searching test than these of our Church work is to be found in the use that is made of our churches by pastor and by people. What use our Church expects her ministers to make of these is clear. She requires every curate, "not being otherwise reasonably hindered," to say morning and evening prayer, calling his people to worship with him. No other meaning can be honestly given to this rubric, than that it contemplates daily prayer as the rule, and the "reasonable hindrance" as the exception. Certainly it does not contemplate the house of prayer remaining closed from Sunday to Sunday. And yet this is too often the case, and that, too, where the minister is truly pious and conscientious. For I should be sorry to think that the want

of these qualifications in the minister is the reason why out of five hundred and thirty-three churches, from which returns have been made to my enquiry on this point, there is daily prayer in only thirty-six and no week-day service whatever in two hundred and eighty-one. The truth is, that to many this rule of our Church has become practically obsolete, the reasonable hindrance being, in their mind, the conviction that daily prayer, however desirable three hundred years ago, is unsuitable to the habits of our age, and that with so many other things to do the clergyman's time might be better employed in his study or his parish. I cannot think so. The age, so far from needing less, seems to me to need more, perhaps, than any other the lesson taught us in the public daily service. For that service is just the solemn protest of our Church against one of the prevalent dangers of our too busy age, the secularizing of our daily life. Her call to daily prayer is her solemn testimony that there is something of greater value than money—of more importance than business—even the one thing needful, the better part which they who choose shall keep for ever. And even for ourselves may not daily service be a help to us against a temptation which specially besets the most zealous and the busiest of us, the secularizing of our very work for God, the temptation to forget, in the midst of all our activity, that prayer, so far from hindering, helps work, nay, is itself the highest and most blessed of all work?

I am well aware of the serious difficulties which in many cases lie in the way of reviving daily service,—the difficulties, for instance, in our great town parishes, where the duties of our too scanty staff of clergy seem already more than they can find time or strength to discharge; the difficulties in the thinly populated country parishes, where it seems often almost hopeless to

think of gathering for daily prayer even the two or three who would make a congregation. And I am, therefore, far from advising that daily prayer should be at once attempted in every church in this Diocese. On the contrary, I should fear that in many cases much contempt and disregard of holy things might be the result of such an attempt. Still I do earnestly counsel the endeavour gradually to raise our people and ourselves up to this higher standard of Church life, and that you should show yourselves willing by much personal sacrifice to help your parishioners to reach it, should any of them desire to do so. Certainly we should, one and all of us, take care how we allow our congregations to think that going to church on Sundays is the highest religious privilege and duty of a Christian man. One thing, at least, we might do in many cases with great advantage. We might throw open our churches every day in the week for the private devotions of the people. Let those who may often have no other spot for private prayer, find here a place where they may enter in and speak alone with their "Father which seeth in secret." I do not believe that this privilege would be often abused. I am sure that ere long it would be gratefully appreciated. Another suggestion I would make to the clergy of our larger towns. The time is, I fear, as yet distant when the number of worshippers at daily prayer will fill each of our parish churches. Why should not our town clergy, meanwhile, set apart a certain number of their churches for daily prayer, where, not one solitary clergyman in turn, but many of them together should resort to pray with the people assembled from all their parishes? Such services would be imposing and hearty, and would not have the chilling and depressing effect which, spite of ourselves, we feel when one solitary minister officiates

for a few worshippers thinly scattered through a large building.

Church Festivals.

The festivals of the Church are not so frequently observed amongst us as I yet trust to see them. The number of churches, for instance, in which Ascension Day is not observed amounts to 155. The disuse into which this day has so generally fallen is difficult to account for. It is not open to the extraordinary charge against Saints' Days, that they are Popish, for it relates to the life of our Lord Himself. It teaches, as do all the other festivals connected with His life, one of the great dogmas of our Faith. It sets forth His presence in Heaven and His continual intercession there for us. And our Church has marked it accordingly with a special preface in her communion office. Whatever be the cause of its neglect, I earnestly press on you the universal revival of its observance. The keeping of the great days in the Christian year is by no means unimportant. They bring visibly before the eyes of all, and especially of the younger or more ignorant members of our flocks, the great facts in the life of Christ on which Christianity rests, and so help, more than we are perhaps aware of, to prevent the distinctly Christian element in our Faith from melting away into mere Deism.

Holy Communion.

But more important, infinitely, than even the frequent week-day services, or the observance of the greater festivals, is the frequent celebration of the holy communion. If daily prayer be the rule, frequent communion is assuredly the spirit and intent of our Church's communion office. When our Church requires every parishioner to communicate at least three times in the year, she certainly never intended that no one of them should

have the power of communicating more frequently than this. This is the minimum of observance that she enjoins; it surely is not the maximum of privilege that she provides for her children. It surely never was her mind that their souls should be "strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ" but three times in the year, as I grieve to say that in some, though happily but few, of the churches in the Diocese is all that is permitted to the parishioners by their pastor. How the clergyman can expect for himself that he shall have strength to do his Master's work, or bear his Master's cross, if he thus starve himself of the heavenly food which his Master has provided for his soul's sustenance I cannot imagine. But I must ask where he has obtained the right thus to starve his flock? No parish priest can be justified or excused in thus laying his parish for the greater part of the year under an interdict. Is it to be wondered at that from such parishes there should come complaints of hindrances to the success of the ministry, from the indifference and deadness of the people, and their utter disregard for all Church ordinances and privileges? What else is to be expected when the chief means of grace are so openly neglected and despised; when the highest act of Christian worship, the very centre and core of it all, is made almost a work of supererogation, a kind of excrescence on the ordinary Christian life, a special compliment in honour of the great festivals, but really no part of Christian worship proper? Can we be surprised if those who have set before them so low a standard of Christian life and worship as this should fall below it still, should even plead in defence of their contempt for holy things their pastor's open disparagement of the highest and holiest of them all? In most of our churches, however, holy communion is now administered

monthly, and this is certainly the minimum of eucharistic privilege which should be provided in every church. I could wish it, as, I doubt not, many of you do, more frequent. Weekly communion is that at which we should all of us aim, and to which we may yet hope to attain. It is not, any more than daily prayer, to be hastily introduced; the people should rather be brought even to hunger for it, than that it be cast down before those who desire it not. But I trust we may yet see the time, and that ere long, when weekly communion shall be the rule, and not as it is now the comparatively rare exception.

Evening Communions.

In some churches in the Diocese I observe that evening communions have been introduced, and, as I am informed, with the effect of largely increasing the number of communicants, and that from a class who could not attend an early celebration. I have never been able to agree with those who regard evening communion as in itself a sin, or even as a practice forbidden by our Church. I cannot set aside the plain, and, to my mind, conclusive fact that the first communion was celebrated at eventide, by Him who assuredly would not have done so had the certainty of His example being followed involved the certainty of sin! I cannot but see, moreover, that if the evils which arose from evening communion in the Church of Corinth warn us of the danger the custom involves, it is clear, first, that it was a custom in Apostolic times, and, secondly, that the inspired Apostle did not believe that the best way of preventing these evils was absolutely to prohibit the custom. I believe, too, that these evils are not so likely to occur in the case of the working classes, who mostly attend evening communion, and whose dinner hour is generally some five or six hours before the evening service. Nevertheless, the practice unquestionably

has its dangerous side, on which it needs to be guarded. It is open, in my mind, to this great objection, that it takes too much of the element of self-denial out of our religion, has too much the air of making the service of God as easy as possible, in order to suit the convenience of every one, instead of requiring from every one the sacrifice of personal ease and convenience for the sake of religious privilege. Those who have evening communion should therefore observe carefully whether they only attend it who really cannot come to the morning or early morning celebration. The moment that they find that others than these do come; that is to say, the moment that they find that the evening communion is made to suit the laziness of the rich instead of the necessity of the poor, they may be satisfied that they are doing as much harm as good by continuing it. Another thing I would remind them of, that if to meet the necessities of those who cannot attend an early celebration they provide an evening one, they are equally bound to meet the conscientious scruples of those, and they are many, who cannot attend noon and who object to evening communion, by providing at least one early celebration in each month.

A on Public Worship.

As regards the extent to which our people avail themselves of the means of grace now so largely provided for them, we may, I think, safely say that the proportion of those who do so is not below that in other Dioceses. That this, however, is everywhere far below what it might and ought to be, we are all of us painfully aware. We have to face the fact, as undeniable as it is alarming, that large numbers of the people of this Christian country attend no place of Christian worship whatever. This "alienation of the masses," not only from the Church but from

Christianity itself, is doubtless the result not of one but of many causes, many of which it is in our power to remedy, and some of which have been and are being remedied. The physical impossibility of worshipping while sufficient church accommodation was not provided, is, as we know, rapidly passing away, though the irreligious habits caused by it will not be altered in the generation which has acquired them. It is to the rising generation, and not to that actually forced into irreligion, that we must look for our congregations of the future; and one of the most hopeful features in the present is the large proportion of the young in our congregations, especially in the towns. The pew system, too, that most ingenious and successful of devices for keeping worshippers out of the church, and quenching all spirit of devotion within it; a system which carefully minimizes the amount of church accommodation, by permanently appropriating to a few families the area which might otherwise be used in succession by more than one body of worshippers, is fast coming to an end. Free and open sittings, where the poor may take their seats, as parishioners, with as good a right and as ready a welcome as the rich, are rapidly dispelling the notion, only too naturally prevalent amongst our working classes, that the church is the place for gentlefolks but not for them; while at the same time they afford accommodation for double and treble the number of worshippers possible under the pew system.

Shorter and Varied Services.

With open sittings have come, and they could not very usefully have come sooner, more frequent and shorter services. One great practical hindrance to general worship in our Church lay in this, that our services had come to be used on the principle that all the worshippers would be free to attend at the same time, and all would

come in about the same condition of bodily strength, age, and intelligence. Only on this principle can we justify the providing of only two long services for all alike, young and old, strong and weak, masters and servants, ignorant and educated. Practically the result has been to exclude from church many who could not come at the hours fixed for Divine Service, and to repel many who either had not the bodily strength to sit them out, or the spiritual culture to enjoy them. Whereas by holding more frequent, shorter, and more varied services, not only can all worship in turn, but the shortened services can be adapted to the bodily strength, the leisure, and even the ages and spiritual attainments of different classes of worshippers. This is absolutely essential to our winning the multitudes to our churches. If we would satisfy them all, we must do as our Master taught us to do, when He fed the multitude by the hands of His disciples. We must break up the great undistinguished masses into portions, making them "sit down by companies," and then proceed to break into convenient fragments the bread of life which He gives us to distribute. In this respect we have gained great facilities by the Church Legislation of this session. The Act of Uniformity Amendment Act enables us, not only to use a shortened week day service, but to use the different offices, so long amalgamated into one, not only separately but in varying order. A third service, too, is now legal, if composed of words taken from the Prayer Book or the Bible. Our churches may be opened also for a sermon, not necessarily preceded nor followed by any service. We hardly yet realize the amount of flexibility and adaptability which these most desirable changes have given to our Service Book. I look forward to most beneficial results from them in an increasing number of

short and attractive services, and of hearty worshippers in our churches.

Alienation of the Masses.

Let us not forget, however, that were all the defects of which I have spoken fully remedied, and many others besides, we should make a great mistake if we supposed that the alienation of the masses would be thereby entirely overcome, or that it ever was or could be in the power of the Church to overcome it. This phrase, "the alienation of the masses from the Church," like most current and popular phrases, has its mixture of truth and falsehood. It is so far true as it implies that from causes plainly visible, and as plainly remediable, the Church has lost in times past large numbers of those who might have been now within her fold. But it is false, so far as it implies that even if she had retained these there would not still remain large numbers alienated not only from her, but from Christianity itself. The accusers and defenders of our Church are alike too apt to forget that it is as truly the nature of Christianity to alienate as to attract; that our religion is the religion of Him who if He won the common people in crowds to hear Him gladly, yet full as often offended and alienated them by His hard sayings, or His faithful rebukes. They forget that it is the nature of truth to offend heresy, of holiness to offend sin, of discipline to offend lawlessness. They forget how many of those now "alienated" would, in days of stricter discipline and sterner faithfulness, have been excommunicated, forbidden, that is, instead of entreated to enter our churches. I, for one, protest against the quiet assumption—latent in so much of the patronising counsel, and patent in so much of the insolent criticism that we are receiving on all sides in this matter—that the sole blame for the alienation of the masses, or of the educated classes, lies at the door of the Church. I protest against the

assumption that popularity is the one only and sufficient test of truth or of worth. To such a test even political and social science refuse to submit themselves. We do not hold education proved worthless, because the masses care so little for it as to need to be compelled to accept it for their children. Nor do we call vaccination a failure, because numbers are so "alienated" from it that they had rather be imprisoned than submit to it. On the contrary, we constantly act on the very opposite principle, namely, that the value of many things is to be estimated not in the direct, but in the inverse ratio of their popularity, and that it is the fault not of those who proffer them, but of those who reject them, if they are not universally accepted. But not only should we protest against this assumption, that the world is in no way to blame for its estrangement from the Church; we should guard against its influence on our own minds. We are in great danger of being insensibly influenced by the prevailing notion that the Church's worth is to be measured by her popularity. Such a feeling is fraught with most serious evils, some of which may be discerned amongst us only too plainly. It leads to moral cowardice and faithlessness, to softening and suppressing the truth, to relaxation of discipline, to wretched attempts at sensation preaching or sensation services. It leads, in short, to latitudinarianism on the one hand, or superstition on the other, according as the multitude we seek to please are the educated or the ignorant. No! our faults may be many and grievous, but one fault, worse than all of them, would be to believe that in the Church's controversy with the world all the fault is hers. Once let her persuade herself of this, once let her regard it as her main duty to "conform herself to the spirit of the age," and the prophetic spirit will have died out of her. She

will no longer "cry aloud and spare not," she will no longer dare to speak the word of the Lord, "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear." She will have taken her place in the World's great Vanity Fair, to raise her voice thenceforth only in crying for customers for her wares, and to shew her wisdom only in skilfully adapting those wares to the ever varying fashions of the hour. "An evil and a horrible thing" would then indeed have come to pass, even that evil thing which filled the Prophet's soul of old with fear for his church and for his country. The Prophets would "prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means," and what should we "do in the end thereof"?

Missionary Work of the Church.

But, if it be not, as most assuredly it is not, our duty merely to please the masses, it is our duty, by every lawful means in our power, to strive to win them. To do this we must not be content with making "all things ready" for their reception. Now, as ever, the invitation to the marriage supper must be pressed upon the unwilling guests. Now, as ever, must the Church not only repeat her Lord's entreaty, "Come," but must go out into the highways and byways and "compel them to come in." She must beware of the danger, I had almost said the sin, of forgetting that her work is everywhere and at all times essentially missionary work,—missionary not only, not mainly even, to the distant heathen, but missionary, as was her Lord's to the lost sheep of the Father's House; missionary as was the good shepherd's who could leave the sheep in the security of the fold to seek the one lost in the wilderness; missionary, as was that of her true prototype, who could leave, in seeming forgetfulness, her hoarded treasure while she swept diligently for the one lost coin until she found it. To neglect this work of self-sacrificing love in the safer and

easier work of guarding what she already possesses, is not merely to neglect one half of her divinely appointed task, but it is to imperil the failure of that other part for which she has neglected this.

He who does not so truly love all the sheep committed to his charge as to care for and seek for those without the fold, will soon lose, if he ever has possessed, the love that would bid him feed and tend those within it; may soon come even to acquiesce in their straying from it one by one, provided only that the fold be left, however empty, in his undisturbed possession. Certainly he will never gain that vigorous toil-hardened strength, that keenness of sight and quick watchfulness, that patient endurance, which though they come from encountering the perils and fatigues of the wilderness, are equally needed within the safer pastures at home. It is in the free collisions of opinion, in the controversies that bring us face to face, not with docile and respectful disciples, but with resolute and even angry opponents, that we gain those broader and yet clearer views of truth that fit us best to teach it to our own people. It is in dealing with all the direst forms of spiritual disease that lie outside the sanatorium of the Church, that we gain that practised skill of the physician, which will make us quick to discern and wise to treat the very first symptoms of the like disease within its walls. Be sure of this, my dear and reverend brethren, that to seek and save the lost is the best way of learning how to feed and keep those who are in the way of safety, and that he who is not a true missionary in his parish can never be more than half a pastor.

Church Missions.

To this truth our Church is becoming thoroughly alive. No more hopeful sign of her reviving life is to be seen than in the revival and growth of church missions, as a

distinct branch of Church work. The conversion of sinners, the awakening and arousing of the careless, the reclaiming of the outcast, first by the ministry of the Word, and then by close personal dealing of soul with soul and heart with heart, in bringing them one by one, lovingly, wisely, tenderly to Jesus, this is, thank God for it, the work which year by year is enlisting and training a larger and still larger band of practised and disciplined workers. It is a special work and needs special gifts for its right performance,—gifts not only of fervour and earnestness, but of unction, of spiritual insight, yes, and let me add, of sound common sense. It has, like every work for God, its own special difficulties and dangers, but it has also its own special encouragements and rewards. Assuredly it is being largely blessed and owned of God.

It has been my privilege to take part in more than one such mission in this Diocese, and I trust to take part in many more. It is work in which one learns much, and of what I have learned from it, there are two things which I specially desire to impress on those of you who may be led to engage in it. First, that church missions are not needed only in the great towns; and, secondly, that they are not needed only by the poorer classes. Our country parishes need quite as much as town parishes the occasional stirring of their comparatively undisturbed and possibly stagnant life; and most assuredly the rich and the respectable need quite as much as the poor to be reminded that they have souls. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" is as true now as it was when those words were first spoken. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches are as likely to choke the Word now as they were when the sower first went forth to sow his seed. And be it remembered, too, that even as regards her power of

winning and influencing the poor, the Church commits a fatal mistake, if she gives them reason to think that she regards them as sinners above all others, while dealing in their sight, with timid and invidious tenderness, with the sins of the rich and the great. Let her never forget that her Lord's words of sharpest rebuke were for the most respectable people of His day; that His scourge of small cords was knotted and wielded in the Temple, which wealth, not poverty, had turned from a house of prayer into a den of thieves.

Let me add a caution as to one other special danger attending mission work. The excitement which is often produced by the earnest and powerful preaching of the Word is too often not only transitory, but perilous in its after reaction. It becomes, however, a far more serious peril, if the preacher aim at producing it in every case as an evidence of conversion; still more so, if he fall into the further error of teaching his hearers to regard it as evidence not only of conversion but of salvation. The heresy, for I can give it no other name, of instantaneous salvation—the notion, that is, that a man is saved at once and for ever the instant that he feels a firm persuasion that he is saved, is visibly tainting some of our mission work, and is tending, as all doctrinal error ultimately tends, to loss of true spiritual power by the degrading of what is spiritual into what is materially visible or tangible. Once let physical emotion, or any other sensation or experience in ourselves, be regarded as the indispensable test of a man's salvation, and the getting up of these will become as mere a piece of legal formalism as any one of those "works" which the Solifidian so energetically repudiates. In all our mission work let us be true to the teaching of our own Church, that every baptized soul is to be regarded as "a member of Christ,"

"a child of God," not saved but brought into "a state of salvation," a state in which conversion is therefore possible, is almost always necessary in order that those who are in the way of being saved may attain at last to that final salvation which comes to each one only in that day when the great Husbandman gathers His wheat into the safety of His garner.

Confirmations.

Another test of our Church life is the number of candidates for confirmation. A confirmation tour at once reveals to a Bishop the weak spots in his Diocese. When, for instance, of two adjacent parishes he finds one, with a population of 4,000, sending 100 candidates, and another, with a population of 6,000, sending only 9, he has no need to ask what manner of men the respective incumbents are. He knows at once, and only too well, what must be the condition of the parishioners who enjoy the ministry of the one and of those who endure the ministry of the other. In the main, however, confirmations in this Diocese give encouraging results. The annual rate of candidates, for the whole Diocese, is a little over 11,000, a number which might be, and I hope will yet be, considerably increased, but which it must be remembered is attained to in spite of the very considerable opposition and even social persecution which the candidates have too often to encounter,—an opposition which, I confess, surprises me the more inasmuch as it comes in many cases from those who claim to be the special champions of civil and religious liberty, and who are never weary of denouncing the bigotry and intolerance of the Church. I have been much gratified by observing the pains evidently taken by the clergy and churchwardens in the churches where I have held confirmations, in rendering the service impressive and edifying, as also by the care taken in

accompanying the candidates to and from the church, and in preserving them from those temptations which in olden times must have made confirmations, in too many cases, a doubtful blessing.

The only wish that I have to express on this subject is for a more equal distribution of the candidates amongst the centres for confirmation. My great aim in multiplying these centres as much as possible has been to prevent overcrowding at any one of them, more especially the crowding of country candidates into the towns. It is manifest that this object will be entirely frustrated unless the clergy will agree to send their candidates, as much as possible, to their nearest centre. A little previous conference and arrangement would, I have no doubt, leave nothing to be desired in this respect.

Elementary Education.

Closely connected with the subject of confirmation is that of the education of the young in our day schools and Sunday schools. In the work of education our Diocese stands deservedly high, whether as regards the number, the sufficiency, or the efficiency of our elementary schools, a state of things for which, besides the zealous labours of the parochial clergy, we are mainly indebted to our well organised Boards of Education, and our system of Diocesan inspection.

The statistics of our elementary education in this Diocese, so far as I have been able to gather them from the returns to my visitation enquiries, are as follows:—

Number of Church Schools	542
Number of Scholars	46,410
Schools enlarged or built since last visitation	105
Schools inspected by Government since passing of Education Act	388
Schools reported on by Government Inspector	276
Accepted as Public Elementary Schools under the Act	224

A great effort, as you are aware, was made in the last two years to enlarge and improve our school buildings in order to meet during the so-called year of grace the requirements of the Education Act. The total amount of voluntary contributions expended on our schools since last visitation, from this and other sources, has amounted to £31,317. The number of places where school boards have been established in the Diocese amounts only to nineteen. These statistics show clearly how largely successful have been the efforts of Churchmen in this Diocese to meet the educational needs of our three counties.

A brief review of the history of elementary education in the past two years may help to define for us our present position and our duties in the future. When, some two years ago, Parliament proposed to deal anew with the subject of national education, it was found that the Church had so zealously availed herself of the opportunities given by former legislation, that nearly eighty per cent. of the children under education were in her elementary schools. This fact was naturally most distasteful to all who were either politically or religiously hostile to our Church. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that these should have united in a league, the main object of which was to deprive the Church of this vantage ground. This association combined from the first two distinct and even antagonistic parties, the Secularist and the Religious: the former desirous of eliminating religion altogether from national education; the latter desirous of retaining it so far as might be consistent with the exclusion of the Church from all share in giving it. Our Church schools were accordingly exposed from the first to the united assaults of those who hated the Church more than they loved religion; and of those who hated reli-

gion more than they hated the Church. The assault took at first the form of a demand for what was called non-sectarian religious teaching. It was gravely, and I am sure most honestly, proposed by the religious wing of the association to discover, and to teach in the State schools, some rudimentary form of Christianity which should be common to all Christian sects and Churches in the country, and yet should have in it nothing so distinctively Christian as seriously to offend those who rejected Christianity altogether. This proposal had the remarkable peculiarity of violating every one of the most cherished principles of its proposers. In the first place it would have thrown on the State—utterly unfit in the judgment of these very persons for dealing with religious questions at all—the delicate and difficult task of extracting from all the religious beliefs of the nation their common element, and then of so defining this by Act of Parliament as to make sure that this, and nothing else, should be taught in the State schools. In the next place, had the State succeeded in doing this, the result would have been simply the establishment and endowment of a new form of religion,—a form which, moreover, would have been thoroughly sectarian as regards all those who might not have happened to approve of it; while as regards religious equality it would have most unduly favoured those who believed least—and who, therefore, might have all their religion taught in the State school—over those who believed most and who, therefore, would have hardly anything taught that they could call religion. In short this earlier stage of the education controversy presented the extraordinary spectacle of sects denouncing sectarianism; voluntaryists proclaiming the failure of a voluntary system; haters of establishments demanding the establishment and endowment of a new State religion; and

champions of religious liberty proposing to imprison Churchmen for refusing to send their children to schools of which they might conscientiously disapprove.

Happily for the nation, this extraordinary proposal to establish and endow what would have been at best but a Parliamentary Deism was found impracticable. It could not survive the attempt to embody it in a legal form, in the shape of the memorable proviso that in rate-supported schools no religious teaching should be given for or against the tenets of any religious sect! The force of absurdity could go no further. The religious difficulty was relegated by Parliament to school boards, and the promoters of unsectarian education at last confessed that they had "ceased to hunt after the phantom of an unsectarian religion." The religious section of the league having thus failed in their attempt to exclude the Church from all share in national education by the invention of a new religion, the Secularists now claim to try their plan of thrusting out religion and the Church together. They demand that in State schools no religious teaching whatever shall be given, but that this be left entirely to the efforts of the various religious denominations on Sundays; or, as they have expressed it, they claim—the school for the State; religion for the Churches.

This proposal, in its naked irreligiousness, happily as yet shocks the mind of the English nation, which still desires, by a large majority, that religion of some kind shall be taught in our schools, though unhappily it cannot decide what religion this shall be. Accordingly anxious, honestly anxious, to preserve some element of religion in national education, the non-sectarianists have taken their stand upon the reading of the Bible in the Board schools. The logic, however, of their position is not equal to its conscientiousness. The reading of the Bible in a rate-

supported school is clearly a violation of the principle on which they oppose the teaching of the Church Catechism in such a school; namely, that no one shall pay directly or indirectly for any religious teaching of which he disapproves. The New Testament is rejected by the Jew. The Authorised Version is disapproved of by the Roman Catholic. The whole of the Bible is rejected by the Secularist, who denounces it as a collection of superstitious and immoral fables. On what principle of justice, then, is the Churchman to be forbidden to teach the Church Catechism to children of his own belief, out of respect for the conscientious scruples of Dissenting rate-payers, and the Dissenter allowed to teach the Bible to children of his belief in spite of the conscientious scruples of the Roman Catholic, or Jewish, or Secularist rate-payer? It is obviously as just, or as unjust, to teach the one as it is to teach the other, and certainly those who insist, on the ground of religious equality, in excluding the one will not long be able to insist on retaining the other.

Secularism, therefore, pure and simple, just because it is pure and simple, that is to say, logical and consistent with itself, has a tremendous advantage over its religious anti-Church allies in the coming struggle for religious education. There are, in fact, but three courses possible as regards the teaching of religion in the schools of a State where more than one religion exists. One is to teach all that you believe to that part of the school which will receive it: this is the Denominational system with the Conscience clause. The second is to teach a part only of what you believe to the whole school: this is the now exploded "phantom of a non-sectarian religion." The third is to teach no religion at all. The second being by common consent abandoned, the Church, which represents the first principle, stands almost alone, face to face with

Secularism, to fight the great battle of religious education in the future.

Nor must we disguise from ourselves the fact that this conflict will be severe. I cannot share, at least, the optimist views of those who speak of our education difficulties as nearly at an end; they seem to me only beginning. I do not, in saying this, refer to the attempts that will certainly be made in Parliament to alter the terms of the Education Act to the pecuniary injury of our Church schools. These may not and probably will not be successful, and even if successful, I should not fear but that the increased energies of the Church would more than compensate for any disabilities that might in this way be imposed upon her. The danger that really threatens religious education is one less direct and apparent, but for that reason all the more formidable. It is the strong tendency towards secularism in the practical working of the Education Act, both as regards the Denominational and the Board schools. In the case of the latter, Parliament having thrown the religious difficulty on the school boards, they will certainly throw it, in their turn, on the teachers. Religion, being the one subject on which the peace and harmony of the board is likely to be disturbed, after a short period of religious contention, will, by common consent, be avoided as much as possible. It will become the teacher's business and not that of the board. The teacher, however, will not be slow to discover that the one subject which is likely to bring him into collision with his employers is just the one subject which it in no way pays him to teach. Naturally, therefore, he will be more and more tempted to avoid this as much as possible, and if he teach it, to do so in the most perfunctory manner possible. Such a position must be intolerable for every earnest man who has any definite faith of his own. The

result will necessarily be, that such men will less and less seek the office of school teacher, and thus our school board system may gradually drift into Secularism; the aim of the Secularist being more surely and more safely, because more quietly, attained by eliminating religion from the mind of the schoolmaster, than by eliminating it from the programme of the school.

On the other hand, as regards our own Church schools, it must be remembered that religious teaching is now merely tolerated by the State. It forms no essential part of the school programme, nor of the examination by the Government Inspector; nor does any part of the income of the teacher necessarily depend upon the proficiency of the scholars in this part of their education. Naturally, therefore, the teacher is tempted to regard religious instruction as something that interferes with his real work; as at best a work of supererogation, which he may do for the love of it, but which it is directly his interest to disparage or neglect. Doubtless this is a temptation which will be and has been nobly resisted by many of our teachers, whose conscientious attachment to their Church, and love of the faith she has trained them in, we know and value as it deserves. Nevertheless it is a temptation, even to those whom we may have trained, while we must remember that efforts will be made to prevent our training any teachers hereafter.

'Diocesan' Inspection.

Our real danger, therefore, in the future is this undercurrent to Secularism, both in Board and in Denominational schools, and our whole aim, therefore, should be to strengthen and deepen the religious element in our Church schools. In order to do this, it is clear that the Church must step in and fill the place which the State has vacated for her, in the matter of religious inspection. If inspection be, as it confessedly is, an invaluable stimulus and cor-

rective in the secular part of school work, I cannot see why it should not be so in the religious part of it too. I am quite aware that there is that in religion which no religious inspector can test, and I am well aware too of the danger of knowledge of religious facts being substituted for religion itself; but this is really an incident, not of religious inspection, but of religious school teaching itself, which must, in the main, consist in giving religious knowledge whether of dogma, or precept, or history—a knowledge which it is all important our children should possess, and which may, like all other knowledge, be promoted by inspection. And, if there is to be such inspection, all will agree that it is desirable that it should be independent, authoritative, and, as far as possible, uniform. Only so can it really strengthen the hands of the school manager, by the help of a trained and impartial judgment and the weight of a recognised and authorised office in the Church. In this light I believe the greater part of the clergy and school managers of this Diocese have come to regard the Diocesan Inspector. The old prejudice, which at first regarded him as something of a spy for the Education Board, or the Bishop, has almost expired. He is now, for the most part, recognised for what he really is, a valuable helper in the work of education, whose duty it is to ascertain for the manager in the first place, far more than for any one else, the real condition of his school.

I need not say it to you, who know it better than I can, how admirably the Diocesan Inspectors in this Diocese have done their work—a work entirely, on their parts, a labour of love. We cannot speak too gratefully of their zeal and self-denying efforts, or of the impetus they have given to education. The question, however, has arisen whether, in the present altered position of the education

question, voluntary Diocesan inspection may not usefully be combined with or even replaced by paid inspection. This question is one that certainly has two sides, and these have been so recently discussed at length in our Conference, that there is no need I should bring before you the arguments on the one side or the other. The practical conclusion to which we have come seems to me decidedly a wise one. We have, by the most liberal aid of the laity of the counties of Northampton and Leicester, established a paid inspector for each of those counties, while in the county of Rutland, from no lack of willingness to contribute the necessary funds, but from unwillingness to disturb a very compact and well ordered system of voluntary inspection, this latter system is for the present retained. The two systems will thus be tested side by side, not at all in antagonism, but in friendly rivalry, and even with some degree of co-operation. A year hence we shall all be better judges as to their respective merits. Meanwhile all, I think, will be of opinion that that system of inspection is best which best unites and directs the whole energies of the Diocese in one well ordered and uniform scheme of religious training; for we may depend upon it that if we would not be beaten in detail, we must work altogether in this matter. The isolated clergyman, in his own school, will find himself eventually unable to cope with the hostile influences of which I have spoken, and will need all the encouragement that can only come from united Diocesan action. The words "My school," "My church," "My parish," are words that have worked wonders in their time. They express the deep sense of personal responsibility, as well of real independence, which our parochial system generates: but the words "Our schools," "Our churches," "Our parishes," represent another idea not less important—one becoming more

and more important—namely, that of the union, the conference and the co-operation which our Diocesan system was meant to foster.

Diocesan religious inspection, moreover, should be strengthened by prize schemes for the children, and by giving to the inspector's report some distinct value in the incomes of the teachers. But infinitely more important even than these material helps to religious education will be the spirit which the clergy may individually throw into this work, not only by their own earnestness in it, but by their sympathy with their teachers. There can be no greater danger to religious teaching than that arising from estrangement, or a sense of separate interests between the clergy and the school masters. And if the Education Act, by giving, as it does, a more independent position, and a higher status, to the teacher, rather tends to this, the only way it can be met is by the clergy cultivating still kindlier and closer relations with their teachers—by joining, as I am glad to see in some parts of this Diocese they are joining, in their teachers' associations—by manifesting in this, and in all other possible ways, a personal and friendly interest in their duties and their trials —by shewing, in fact, that they regard the school teacher as their valued fellow labourer in the great work of the religious culture of their people.

Sunday Schools.

One effect, however, of recent changes will be, I hope, to draw increased attention to our Sunday schools, as a most important element in the work of religious education. The Sunday school has become the substitute, perhaps not altogether the most desirable substitute, for the public catechising of the young as directed by our Church. Public catechising by the clergyman, really well done and done

in Church, is the best of all possible ways of instructing our youth, and indirectly our adults, in the doctrines of our Faith. Catechising, however, has become almost a lost art amongst us, and until it is renewed—until the order of catechists shall be revived, and even then in our large towns where the number of children are too great to allow of their being all catechised in Church—the Sunday school is indispensable, and should, therefore, be made as efficient as possible. That it may be so, however, it should never be forgotten that *it is* the substitute for catechising in Church, and that its aim should be that of the catechist, the instructing of the young in their belief. The clergyman should regard the Sunday school teacher as his mouthpiece for this purpose. The weakness of our Sunday school system has been the notion, too commonly entertained, that a Sunday school is a place where children come to say collects and hymns, and to be talked to in a desultory way by any good people who may volunteer for that purpose: in short, that any one who is only earnest and pious may make a Sunday school teacher, and may teach very much what he or she pleases. The result is that the minds of the unfortunate children, as they move from class to class and teacher to teacher, must, if they take in any definite ideas at all, become so many theological kaleidoscopes, filled with the many coloured and many shaped scraps of religious thought which they may have received from their successive instructors; while the Sunday school itself fails utterly to be what it ought to be, the porch to the Church, the place where the young are moulded and trained into intelligent attachment to their own faith. Nothing, indeed, is more common than for children educated for years in Church Sunday schools to pass over into Dissent, a thing simply impossible had they been properly instructed in the reasons for their own

belief and trained to love, and to know why they loved, their own Church.

The clergyman who really wishes his Sunday school to tell in his parish, should first choose and then teach his teachers. These should meet him once a week, to prepare their subjects for the coming Sunday. The lessons, not more than two at most for the whole school, and forming a regular and carefully selected course for the year, should be studied by the teachers under the presidency of the clergyman ; the best mode of treating them considered, the general line of thought, the main proofs and illustrations agreed upon, so that a character should be distinctly impressed on the whole teaching in the school. Some such plan, carefully carried out, would soon make the teaching systematic, definite, and really catechetical, instead of vague, desultory and merely hortatory. The children thus trained would pass naturally on to confirmation and first communion, and the clergyman would not find himself, as he now too often does, compelled to begin by teaching in his confirmation class the very first elements of the Faith to children that may have been for years in his own Sunday school. Such a mode of teaching has, moreover, this indirect advantage for the clergyman, that it tells not only in the school, but ultimately in the parish, where the Sunday school teachers become a band of his disciples, reflecting his teaching and supporting and extending his influence out of the school, as well as in it. I earnestly counsel all of you, who may not yet have done so, to form Sunday school teachers' classes, and I would suggest that you would find great assistance in conducting these classes from the admirable publications of the London Sunday School Institute.

Lay Agency.

The Sunday school teacher, however, is but one of the

many forms of lay help that the clergyman may call to his aid. District visitors, Scripture readers, Bible women, deaconesses, sisterhoods, guilds of Church workers, are some amongst the various forms in which the services of pious laymen and laywomen are now being made available for the work of the Church. No parish should be without some one of these. For there is no parish, however small, in which the laity have not duties which are properly theirs, and there are few parishes, however large, in which the work of the Church might not be overtaken, if all the laity who could take their proper share of that work would do so. I cannot say that this has been done in this Diocese at all to the extent to which it might and I hope yet will be done. The number of parishes in this Diocese in which there is no lay agency of any kind other than that of Sunday school teachers, amounts, I regret to see, to three hundred and eighty-eight.

The reason for this deficiency of lay help lies, as it seems to me, neither in the unwillingness of the laity, as is sometimes alleged by the clergy, nor in the jealousy of the clergy, as is sometimes alleged by the laity, but in the want of a clearer appreciation on both sides of the true functions of the laity in the Church of England. Our Church, on this point, presents a remarkable contrast to Nonconformity, on the one hand, and to the Church of Rome on the other. In each of these systems the laity have their clearly defined position. In the former it is that of rule and government, in the latter that of duly authorised service. The member of a Nonconformist congregation discharges functions which we think are properly those of the presbyterate or the episcopate. Nevertheless these are his known and recognised duties for the discharge of which he is responsible to the com-

munion to which he belongs. The laity of the Church of Rome, on the other hand, have equally definite spheres of work in the many fraternities, guilds, sisterhoods and minor orders of one kind or another in which, under the direct authority of their Church, they may devote themselves to works of charity and piety. No such definite positions are assigned to the laity in our Church. She has, indeed, carefully preserved the rights and privileges of the three-fold order of the ministry. But she has not followed the example of the Catholic Church in her best days, by giving to the laity their full and lawful share of duties and of privileges. The cause of this has been the excessive, and perhaps inevitable recoil at the time of the Reformation from the abuses and excesses of the religious orders. The discredit attaching to these extended to all those ecclesiastical organizations in which the laity had for ages served the Church. These came to be regarded, and are still largely regarded, as Popish, instead of what they really are in their origin and idea, catholic and primitive safeguards against Romish exaggerations of the claims of the priesthood ; asserting as they do the right of the laity to minister in holy things. The consequence has been, that when the laity, sharing in the revival which has visited our Church, sought their share in her work for God there was no recognised place found for them in her ranks. Their offices had either become altogether obsolete or had merged in those of the clergy. No wonder, then, that their first efforts should have been irregular, sometimes even disorderly. No wonder, either, that the clergy looked at first askance on those who seemed to them to be usurping their functions, whereas they were only reclaiming, however irregularly, their own. This difficulty will vanish, is vanishing, just in proportion as the true rights and functions of the clergy

are more clearly recognised. Once let it be fully seen that the clergy have certain powers and duties, differing from those of the laity not in degree but in kind, and then it will be seen that all beside these may lawfully be claimed by and required of laymen, without the least risk of their encroaching on the office of the clergyman. Lay preaching, lay catechising, lay evangelising in all its various forms, lay fraternities or associations for ministering to the sick, the poor, the ignorant, with that special knowledge and skill which can only come from the long gathered experience and traditions of a special organization devoted to a special work, will be seen to be not only lay rights but, what is far more important, lay duties. Only let all these duties be performed decently and in order. Let the laity recognize their parish priest as one set over them in the Lord, not to rule them as so many subjects, but to lead them as so many fellow soldiers; and let the clergyman fearlessly enlist and press into the Church's service every parishioner who shows any aptitude or willingness for work; finding now the man for the office and now the office for the man, and uniting still all such helpers, from the least to the greatest, in one common parochial band of Church workers, who shall feel themselves to be Church workers—that is working for the Church and not merely as a favour or compliment to him—and lay help in the Church will soon be something very different from the tentative, desultory, irregular thing it now too often is. As to the names we may give to such lay organizations, they matter very little. I have no love for the ecclesiastical pedantry which would insist on reproducing in the nineteenth century every institution that existed in the twelfth or the fourth or any other century. The last thing I wish to see is our English Church dressed for a mediæval or a Roman

masquerade. Call the Christian men and women who help you what you and they please, only get their help. The right name will soon attach itself, by a process of natural selection, to the right thing. Once let us have the work and we shall soon find out the best name to give the workers.

One step in this direction I have taken in introducing in this Diocese the order of lay reader as approved of by the Convocation of our Province. The reader is a layman duly licensed by the Bishop to discharge, under the direction of the incumbent, what may be called the office of the evangelist. His duties are to seek out the poor and sick in the parish and bring them to the knowledge of the curate, to read the lessons in the parish church, to hold mission services, to preach at these, if he shows gifts for preaching; in short, to perform all the the duties of a deacon, save those which appertain to the stated ministry of the Word in the congregation and to the administration of the sacraments. No payment attaches to this office. It has, I am glad to say, been undertaken by laymen of means and position in this Diocese, and I should be most thankful to see it spreading and taking deeper root amongst us than it has hitherto done. I am satisfied that our great town parishes can never be properly worked without a staff of such lay evangelists.

Diocesan Organization.

This subject of the organization of Church work in our parishes naturally leads up to the wider one of Diocesan organization. The Diocese and not the parish is the true unit of our Church system. The Diocese did not succeed, it preceded, the parish. The missionary Bishop, who took possession in his Master's name of the lands of the heathen began by forming his own διοίκησις or παροικία—for the Diocese was his parish—within which the cure of

all souls was vested in him as chief pastor. From his seat or cathedral he sent out his mission clergy, to whom, as they succeeded in making converts, by degrees parishes were assigned, in which they held from him the cure of souls. But they were not, by this limitation of their mission, severed from their original relation to the Bishop or to one another as members of the same Diocese. They had their place, as of right, in the Diocesan synod or great Council of the Diocese, while those who remained at the central place of government, the cathedral, formed the lesser council or chapter with whom the Bishop might take more frequent and intimate counsel on the affairs of the Diocese. The idea of a Bishop governing his Diocese by enforcing, by separate missives to his clergy, their obedience to a cut and dried code of laws, was as little known to the founders or the reformers of our Church as it was to primitive antiquity. No such heavy charge of solitary and isolated rule was imposed on us; no such scattered and disorganized existence was designed for you.

Such a Diocesan constitution was essential to the true life of the Church, not merely because it built up into one living body the separate elements of her parochial life, but because it gave to the one body thus formed that power of continuous and gradual change which is but another word for growth, and which is the distinctive characteristic and test of the living organism. It gave the Church the power of discarding from her system whatever had become obsolete, of adopting whatever had been proved to be valuable, thus providing continually new bottles, as it were, for the new wine that from time to time might ripen in her vineyards; it gave her the power, too, of checking the errors of individuals before they grew into schisms, of reforming abuses before they spread and

hardened into general evil customs. In a word, it gave the Church that power of self-adaptation to the changing circumstances of her day without which no institution can long escape the danger of perishing either of decay or of violent and fatal disruption.

The revival of this life of the Diocese has followed in the natural order of things upon the revival of spiritual life in our parishes. The Church in her restored vitality is developing herself according to the inner laws of her own being. First, the revived Convocation, then congresses, synods, conferences, are all attesting the deeper and still deeper yearning of the Church after those higher forms of unity which express while they preserve her highest form of life.

Ruri-Decanal and Diocesan Conferences.

You are all of you aware of what has been done in this direction in our own Diocese. With the valuable and ready help of the rural deans, who have thereby greatly added to the labours of their office, the clergy and representative laity of each parish have been united in ruri-decanal chapters and conferences, for the discussion of questions affecting the interest of the Church. And from these ruridecanal conferences, by a system of elective representation, which I think in the main commends itself to the acceptance of the Diocese, has been formed our Diocesan conference of clergy and laity, which has just held its second session. The constitution of this conference I do not propose now to discuss; it is doubtless capable of amendment, as it has already received most valuable amendments in its last session. Other amendments will probably come as we continue to work it. I only pause at this point to thank you for the willingness you have, almost without exception, shown to give it, at my request, a fair trial.

I am satisfied, however, that as the system of Diocesan conferences takes root and grows amongst us, it will be recognised more and more by all of us to be an absolute necessity of Church life, not only as a centre of union both for clergy and laity and an impulse to Church work, but as a means of eliciting and expressing Church opinion. In most Dioceses in England a Bishop can now obtain, on very short notice, through the ruridecanal conferences the opinion of his Diocese on any Church question of importance or urgency. He is placed thus, for his own guidance and support, thoroughly *en rapport* with all the clergy and with the leading laity in the Diocese, while they, on the other hand, have an opportunity of influencing by the expression of their sentiments that public opinion by which we are more and more being governed. In this latter respect the conference is a step, and a most important step, towards our attaining that power of self-regulation and self-reform which seems to me by far the most pressing need of our Church. Of all the many and diverse Church reforms now advocated on all sides, the most needed is surely that of giving power to the Church to effect for herself any one of these.

Power of Self-Regulation for the Church.

At present our relations to the State are such that an Act of Parliament is required to effect the slightest change in any one of our rubrics. I leave you to imagine what would be the condition of the army or the navy, if a code of regulations for all departments of the service having been drawn up three hundred years ago, no power had been given to the heads of it to alter even the least of these without passing the proposed alteration through the ordeal of three readings and a committee in both Houses of Parliament. One of two things would in that case certainly have happened. Either no new regulations

would ever have been made, and the service would, therefore, be now petrified in the condition in which it was three hundred years since; or else the existing regulations would be strained, evaded, and set at defiance at every turn, to the utter destruction of all discipline, and the ultimate disorganization of the entire force. This is precisely our case. Our rubrics and canons, drawn up three hundred years ago, are necessarily many of them obsolete, and some of them are actually hindrances to our present requirements. The result has been a state at once of the most vexatious restriction and the most perilous licence; the laws of our Church fitting her at this moment like an ill-made garment, tight where they should be loose and loose where they should be tight. What we most need, therefore, is the power of altering our canons and rubrics from time to time as we may find necessary or expedient, subject of course to the consent of the Crown in Council, and with the condition that any such change shall not have been protested against by either House of Parliament.

There is nothing whatever in the nature of our union with the State to prevent our having this power. Nor can I think that Parliament, which does not greatly covet Church legislation, would be very unwilling to grant us some such power; subject, however, to one very important condition. Parliament, we may be satisfied, would never intrust, and I think ought not to entrust, such power to any purely clerical body. The laity should in some form or other be given both voice and vote in any such internal legislation. This being provided for, I cannot see that there would be any serious difficulty or danger in granting to the Church some such right of self-regulation as she certainly so greatly needs. In what way and on what conditions a place should be provided for the laity in our

Church Councils—whether, for instance, this should be, as many propose, by their admission to a reformed Convocation; or by a body of lay representatives, sitting at the same time with Convocation, as others have proposed; what again should be the qualifications of laymen for admission; whether the laity would submit to the revival of Church discipline which certainly would be required in order to define for purposes of legislation what a Church layman really is—these are questions far beyond the scope of such an address as this. All that I care now to draw your attention to is the growing feeling among Churchmen of all parties for reform in this direction, and the evident value accordingly of Diocesan conferences, as leading us up towards the solution of this question, partly by the example they are setting of lay and clerical union in Church Councils, but mainly by the strong body of Church opinion which they are gradually forming in favour of this first and most important of all Church reforms.

Whenever this reform shall have been effected, many another, which now seems hopelessly remote, will follow speedily and safely; for the Church is really far more anxious for her own improvement than those are who, while denouncing all her defects, jealously refuse her any power of remedying them. But until we do obtain this power I doubt very much the use, or even the wisdom, of urging any large schemes of Church reform upon Parliament—a body at present neither especially willing nor, perhaps, especially fitted to deal with the details of such questions—but which, I believe, would be honestly desirous to give effect to any measures which had received the deliberate sanction of a really representative Church Assembly.

Church Reform.

Meanwhile, we have ample opportunity given us for

considering all manner of possible or impossible schemes of Church reform. Their name is legion. They range from the most cautious and conservative improvements to the wildest and most revolutionary changes; while, as a rule, the wilder the change the louder are its advocates in urging it as the sole and only panacea which is to save the Church from impending ruin. The louder, too, is their denunciation of the timidity or faithlessness of the rulers of the Church, who hesitate at once to adopt all these contradictory schemes of radical reform; but who may, perhaps, be allowed to plead in their own defence that nothing is easier than to be brave and thorough-going on paper, and that there may after all be as much moral courage in resisting a popular cry as in earning a cheap popularity by adopting it.

I shall not attempt to discuss any one of these proposed reforms, partly because the subject is far too large to be treated of merely as one amongst a number of others; but mainly because, as I have already said, I am persuaded that our wisdom at this moment would be to concentrate all our energies, not in carrying this or that particular change, but in obtaining power to make from time to time as many changes as we may find to be needed. One or two general cautions, however, I should wish to suggest on this subject, knowing as I do how deeply it occupies the minds of all earnest Churchmen at this moment.

In the first place, then, I would suggest to you, that before you join in any "movement" for abolishing or reforming any existing institution in our Church, you be sure that you understand what you are proposing to reform. Be quite sure that you have really grasped its true idea and aim. It may be that you have not done this, and that if you had you would have discovered that

what it really needed was neither abolition nor yet radical reform, but simply revival; simply the better and truer carrying out of the purpose for which it was originally designed.

One of the questions most commonly asked by our root-and-branch Church reformers respecting any of our institutions which they desire to abolish, is "What is the use of it?" Such a question cannot in truth be asked too often concerning all our institutions, if only it be asked in the right spirit; a spirit, not of impatient and shallow captiousness, but of earnest and reverent inquiry. Such inquiry might in more than one case result in the discovery of uses that have been neglected, and purposes that have been forgotten. It might result in the revival of old duties rather than in the abolition of old offices; in the finding and requiring of work for income, and not in the cutting down of income just to the amount of work that at a given moment is being done for it. If we want an instance of the evil that may be done by the merely destructive and barbarous hewing and cutting down that too often passes for reform, we have it in the history of our cathedrals. These were reformed, as we know, at a time when unhappily their efficiency was nearly at its lowest ebb; and their reform consisted too much in simply reducing their incomes so as to provide exactly for the minimum of service they were then rendering. Now that our cathedrals are beginning to reveal once more their capacities as great Diocesan institutions, we are beginning to see that full work might be found for more than one of their suppressed offices, and fitting use for more than one of their confiscated incomes. The lesson is a weighty one for Church officers as well as for Church reformers; it is the old one that all history, and especially Church history, is ever teaching us. "Whosoever hath to him

shall be given, and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."* Church work rightly done, is, after all, the truest Church defence and the only safe guide to Church reform.

This thought suggests the second caution which I wish to offer to you; it is, to distrust all schemes of Church reform which do not emanate from practical Church workers, and from workers too in that particular department which they propose to reform. I confess to but small respect for philosophical reformers, whether in Church or in State, who evolve out of their inner consciousness abstract and severely logical ideas of State or Church, as they might or ought, in their opinion, to be, without the slightest regard for the actual concrete present of either as it really exists. There is no human institution which might not be conceived of as in some respects other or even better than it is, and for which it would not, therefore, be easy to sketch an ideal constitution quite free from all the defects that are to be found in it in its present form. Your theoretical reformer has, therefore, the double advantage that the evils of the system against which he inveighs are always visible and tangible, while those of the system he would substitute for it are remote and invisible: he can always draw, therefore, upon facts for his censure, and upon his imagination for his promises. The worker, on the other hand, is a reformer, at once more modest and more useful. Knowing, as every good and honest workman must know, that the blame of failure does not always lie with his implements; learning, as he does, to leave a wide margin in every scheme of reform for that disturbing element of which the theorist never takes account—fallen human

* Luke viii. 18.

nature; he contents himself, instead of devising wide and sweeping changes, with simply seeking the removal of those obstacles which from time to time impede his daily task, or with devising from time to time such better ways of doing that task as experience teaches him.

When such workers, devoted as they are to their work, tell us of hindrances that they find in the doing of it and how they think these might be removed, their suggestions are entitled to all possible respect. They are sure to be practical, and will at least have all the wisdom that comes from a single eye and a humble heart. It is to such men that we owe all the real reforms and improvements of late years, and it is to such alone, I confess, that I look with any hope for wise improvement and reform in the future.

And yet such reformers would, I doubt not, be the first to admit the need for this other caution; that before we attempt to remove any seeming obstacle to our work, we should be quite sure that it is an obstacle only, and not a restraint arising out of the essential conditions of the work itself. It is a thought so obvious as to be almost a truism, that what we regard as defects and imperfections, are often only the necessary limitations by reason of which things are what they are, and not something else; and, therefore, that we cannot alter these without actually destroying that of which they are a part, or changing it to something essentially different. It is, of course, quite conceivable that this something essentially different, may be infinitely superior to that which we would alter; but we must clearly understand that we cannot have both. We cannot have at one and the same time the distinguishing advantages of two essentially different and opposite systems—we cannot, for instance, be at once Episco-

palians and Presbyterians, Churchmen and Dissenters, Established and Disestablished, any more than we can be at once rich and poor, or young and old.

Simple and obvious as this consideration seems when stated, it is just the one that is most frequently overlooked by many of our Church reformers. These are constantly urging us to adopt some practice which they see working well in some other religious body, or to get rid of something in our own which they see others dispense with, without pausing to consider whether the change they propose may not be most undesirable just for the very reason that it suits other systems than our own.

One instance may suffice to illustrate my meaning on this point. Amongst the many Church reforms now advocated, few have met with more general acceptance from Churchmen of the most opposite parties than the repeal of the Act of Uniformity, on the ground that it unduly fetters the liberties of the clergy of our Church. Probably few of those who ask for this reform have asked themselves whether they would wish for the election and dismissal of the minister, or the imposition of forms of worship on the minority, by the majority of the congregation. And yet these would be the inevitable results of the repeal of the Act of Uniformity.

The minister of a Nonconformist congregation is, for the most part, free to use what prayers he pleases, but on these two conditions: first, that he shall have been previously chosen by the congregation; and, secondly, that if his prayers displease them they are free to dismiss him. On the other hand, as regards the congregation, the freedom to choose and dismiss their minister exists only for the majority, while the minority is unable to escape from a minister or a worship they dislike except by forming themselves into a new body with another minister of their

own choice. The clergyman in our Church, on the contrary, is not chosen, and cannot be dismissed by his parishioners; but for that very reason he is not free to impose on them any form of worship that he may prefer. The same law that makes him independent of them refuses to make them dependent on him for the manner of their devotions. Give him the power of praying for them as he pleases, and they, or rather the majority of them, will not be slow in claiming their right to choose whom they please to pray for them. Which of these two systems, that of written law, or that of personal rule, best secures the liberties of the clergy and of the parishioners is a question that seems to me to admit of very little doubt. But it is quite certain that we must have one or other of these, and cannot have both; and that, therefore, until we have made up our minds to adopt for our rule of worship the will of the majority of the congregation with all its consequences, it is absurd to exclaim against its only possible alternative, the rule of written and uniform law. The principle which I have thus endeavoured to illustrate is one of very wide application, and would, if fairly applied, dispose of more than one plausible scheme of Church reform, as inconsistent with the principles of our Church and inadmissible, therefore, for all loyal Churchmen. Loyalty, hearty, unswerving, and intelligent loyalty to the distinctive principles of our Church is the one essential condition of all wise Church reform, and of all true Church work.

Three distinctive Principles of our Church.

What, then, we next proceed to consider are those distinctive principles of our Church, which in Church reform, as in Church work and in Church defence, we should ever keep steadfastly in view. They are, as it appears to me, these three: Our Church is first Catholic; secondly, National; thirdly, Established.

First, our Church is Catholic. She is a true branch —in this country *the* true branch—of the Church Catholic, holding the pure Word of God, the Faith and the sacraments, and, with these, mission and authority from Christ to preach the Word and minister the sacraments "according to His ordinance in all things necessary to the same." As such she claims to stand distinguished, on the one hand, from all those congregations which, though consisting of "faithful" *i.e.* of Christian men, have not as she believes any authority from Christ for their self-originated and therefore schismatical organizations; and, on the other hand, from the Roman Communion, which though retaining the succession of its ministry from Christ, yet having, as she believes, corrupted both the Faith and the sacraments, and having certainly no authority or mission in this realm of England, is in her judgment at once heretical and schismatically intrusive.

Secondly, our Church is a National Church. By this we do not mean either that she is established by the State, or that she includes within her pale the majority of the nation. Neither of these circumstances constitutes her a Church National. On the contrary, these are only recognitions of the fact—existing quite independently of, and long antecedent to, any such recognition—that she is National. Her claim to this title arises simply from the fact that she is in England the true branch of the Church Catholic. It dates from the hour in which the first Christian missionary to this country admitted into Christ's kingdom by baptism his first converts. From that hour there existed in this country that visible Kingdom of Christ, to which every member of this nation owes spiritual allegiance, and which, on the other hand, owes to every member of this nation loving and devoted service. All of numbers, of wealth, of State recognition that have accrued to the

Church of England since then, are the accidents, not the essence, of her life. Deprive her of these to-morrow; disestablish, disendow her; diminish her numbers to those of the smallest of existing sects; and she would still be as truly the Church of England as the hundred and twenty in the Upper Chamber were the Church of Jerusalem, or the despised Christians of the Catacombs the Church of Rome.

As a Church National, moreover, our Church of England has her inherent and inalienable rights and powers, as distinguished from those of the Church Catholic of which she is a part. The visible Catholic Church is not a despotism, it is a confederation of independent States, "a republic," as it has been called, "composed of many monarchies," in which each State, that is to say, each National Church, has its own distinct and independent State rights. What these rights are, as defined by our own Church, we shall presently have occasion to consider: enough if I observe at present that it was the assertion of these, far more than of any particular doctrines, which was of the essence of the Reformation. Doctrinally the Reformation was the correction of certain corruptions of faith and discipline. But ecclesiastically it was the assertion of the right of a Church National to make such reforms for herself; and it is in this assertion of her rights as a Church National that there lies the true and lawful Protestantism of the Church of England.

Thirdly, our Church is not only Catholic and National, she is also Established by law: that is to say, she has entered into certain definite relations with the State, involving on the part of the State a certain amount of recognition and of control; on the part of the Church, a certain amount of subjection to the State, and of legally defined duties to every individual of the nation. On the

precise terms of this concordat between Church and State it is not necessary for me to dwell. They are obviously variable, and indeed have been varied from time to time by mutual consent, while the union itself is terminable at the will of either party. All I now wish to say is that this union must necessarily exercise a most powerful influence upon the character, not only of the State, but of the Church. Those accordingly who desire to maintain it, as the vast majority of Churchmen do, must be prepared to do so on the ground that this influence is beneficial not only to the State but to the Church; unless indeed they are prepared to admit, what would certainly be fatal to the very idea of such an union, that it can only be maintained by sacrificing the interests of the State to those of the Church, or the interests of the Church to those of the State. Granting, therefore—nay, asserting most strenuously—that the Establishment of the Church by the State is of infinitely less value than either the Catholicity or the Nationality of the Church, and should therefore be sacrificed without hesitation if it ever really threatened either of these, we must, if we support it intelligently and consistently as Churchmen, do so on the ground that in the main it tends to preserve both her Catholicity and her Nationality, and that its abolition might even seriously endanger both the one and the other.

Assuming, then, that these three characteristics of our Church—her Catholicity, her Nationality, and her union with the State—are all three to be maintained as contributing, though in differing degrees, to her healthy and vigorous life, it is clear that it is only by the combination of these elements in their due proportions that her life can be preserved in the highest degree of vigour.

Danger to our Church from three different directions.

Necessarily, therefore, our Church is always exposed to danger from three different directions. From the exaggeration of the Catholic element in her constitution, and the consequent weakening of the National; from the exaggeration of the National element and the weakening of the Catholic; from the exaggeration of the Secular and the weakening of both the Catholic and the National elements. The danger from the first of these is Ultramontanism, which is the denial of all National Church life and independence. The danger from the second is Sectarianism, which is the denial of all Catholic order and unity. The danger from the third is Erastianism, which is the denial both of the Divine order of the Catholic, and of the true life and independence of the National Church.

The antagonism between these three elements in our Church may be traced through all her history. No great controversy whether as to doctrine, ritual, or Church politics, has ever arisen which did not evoke or rather which was not really caused by it; and no such controversy will ever be either wisely or safely determined without taking into account, not only the existence of these elements, but their respective value and importance in the mixed and balanced constitution of our Church. At no period in her history has this antagonism been more distinctly visible than at this moment, and never, therefore, has she been at once so strong and so weak; so strong with the strength of great principles, powerfully felt and wrought out on all sides, so weak with the weakness which comes from the strife of great principles in the very crisis of their struggle—a crisis which must end either in disruption or in a renewed and deeper harmony.

It may help us, therefore, at once to a calmer and a juster estimate both of our dangers and duties at this

moment, if we trace a little more closely the working and the tendency of these three elements in our Church's life.

Exaggeration of the Catholic Element.

Catholicism, as I have said, untempered by Nationalism, tends to Ultramontanism. It does so not by its assertion that there is one visible holy Catholic Church—this rightly understood is the surest safeguard against Ultramontanism—but by its assertion of a false centre for the unity of the Church Catholic; by placing it, not in the possession by many independent Churches of the fourfold unity of the Faith, the Word, the ministry, and the sacraments, but in the existence of one central and visible government, having the right and the power to decide infallibly for all Churches all questions submitted for its decision. Once this theory is fully embraced, it leads on by rapid steps from General Councils infallibly defining the Faith to General Councils defining the all but essential accessories to the Faith, discipline and ritual. Indeed, if there be anywhere a living infallible authority, there is no reason why these questions should be exempted from its decision any more than questions of the Faith. Naturally, therefore, those who insist upon the infallibility of the central authority grow more and more intolerant of any attempts at independence on the part of National Churches—whose eccentric freedom of action sorely disturbs their ideal of Catholic government—and more and more anxious to extend on every side the limits of infallible authority. On the other hand, as the Church spreads more and more, the difficulty of governing it practically in all details by General Councils increases; and so do the obvious advantages, indeed the all but necessity, of still more centralising the infallible authority; until at last the living voice of the Church representative contracts itself into the voice of one living man, claiming

to have been decreed infallible by the voice of an infallible General Council. Thus the Catholic who starts from the assumption that a living and infallible authority is essential to the unity of the Church Catholic is driven step by step to what is practically the denial of all true Catholicity, Ultramontane Romanism.

This tendency of a false theory of Catholicity is only too plainly illustrated amongst us at this moment. The party in our Church which claims, I must say invidiously, the exclusive title of Catholic, asserts this theory in its extremest form. I think I do no injustice to the leaders of this school of thought, when I state their theory thus. There is and must ever be one visible holy and Catholic Church. To this Church our Lord has by His promise guaranteed infallibility. The voice of this Church, whether uttered in her General Councils or in the form of Catholic consent, is infallible, and, therefore, necessarily binding on all particular or local Churches. So much so that any law of any local Church which contravenes the decrees of any General Council, or sets aside any practice or rite which has ever obtained Catholic assent is *ipso facto* invalid, and not only may but ought to be disregarded and disobeyed by every true Churchman whose allegiance to his own Church is subordinate to his prior duty of allegiance to the Church Catholic. Consistently with this theory, those who hold it avow their desire to restore in our Church all pre-Reformation doctrines and usages, mediæval Christianity being for them that form both of doctrine and of ritual which most exactly fulfils the conditions of Catholic consent. Naturally and necessarily, too, the Reformation, which disowned and rejected many both of these doctrines and practices, is the object of their bitterest dislike, a dislike which no words of theirs seem strong enough to express. Naturally and necessarily, too, such

persons resent all claim on behalf of their own Church for that right to make these changes of which the Reformation was the assertion. This in their view is "the frightful and sterile blunder of Anglicanism"; and those who maintain it and who show themselves loyal to the Prayer-book as it is, are held up to scorn as "mere Anglicans," "intellectual Cretins who cannot count beyond thirty-nine"; while the deliberate defiance of the plainest rules of our Church, the adoption of ceremonies which she has not only not enjoined but has positively forbidden, the teaching of doctrines which not even those who teach them can so much as pretend are not rejected by her, are gloried in as "revivals of Catholic principles" and "assertions of Catholic privileges." Naturally, too, those who claim this "Catholic heritage" of doctrine and discipline resort to the Church of Rome, as that portion of Christendom which has most faithfully preserved all mediæval traditions, as their teacher and their model on these points. And this not only on those broader questions of doctrine or ritual in which it is alleged that Rome has but preserved the traditions of primitive antiquity, but in those for which no such claim can possibly be made. No one can deny—the most advanced members of the party do not themselves care to deny—that it is, in its latest development, marked by a close and even a servile imitation of all the minutest details of Roman Catholic ceremonial; a hankering after Romish theology and Romish forms of private devotion; an almost childish affectation of all the most Romish modes of thought and forms of expression; in short, as they themselves express it, by a "deferential Latinising" of our Church; and that to such an extent that one might not unfairly suppose that the one aim of such persons is to make themselves, in all respects, as like Romish priests as possible, and their greatest happiness

to be mistaken for such; and that the accusation which they would most keenly resent would be that they were capable of supposing that on any point whatever on which the Church of England differs from that of Rome, she can by any possibility be in the right.

One phase, however, of this movement there is, which cannot justly be accused of tending to Romanism; it is one which in the Church of Rome would not be tolerated for an instant: it is the liberty which is now claimed for each individual priest to carry out his own idea of what is Catholic in doctrine or ritual, without the slightest regard either to the written law or the living authorities of his own Church. The calmness with which this demand is made for what is termed the right of the Catholic priesthood, but which is simply a licence never so much as heard of before in any Church in Christendom, would be almost ludicrous were it not most seriously mischievous.

A youthful priest—let us suppose—who has but recently passed an examination for holy orders, in which he may not perhaps have displayed any very profound acquaintance with theology or Church history, finds himself the fortunate possessor of a living, into which he has been inducted on the express condition that he "assents to, and will use the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer and none other, except so far as it may be ordered by lawful authority." No sooner has be been duly inducted than he proceeds to set up in his church the Roman Mass in all its minutest details, of which lights, vestments and incense are but a small part; he duly performs all the genuflexions, crossings and prostrations prescribed in the last edition of his "Directorium," or his "Ritual for the Altar," adding to these, from time to time, such "beautiful symbolisms" as may either

occur to his own mind, or may have been recommended by some correspondent in his Church newspaper as the last "correct thing" in Ritualism. His parishioners, naturally indignant at this deliberate Romanising of their Church and their services—in which they, perhaps, not altogether erroneously, believe that they have some rights, legal and ecclesiastical—remonstrate with him. He informs them in reply that he is a priest of the holy Catholic Church, and that as such it is his privilege to teach and direct them in all things, and their privilege to obey him. They complain to the Bishop, who on writing to the incumbent to inquire into the truth of their complaints, receives the information that all that has been complained of is quite true; that the writer does not intend to alter his proceedings in the very least particular, whatever his Bishop may say to the contrary; that as to his promise "reverently to obey his Ordinary," that only means that he is to obey such directions as the Bishop can enforce in a court of law; and that, at any rate, whatever obedience over and above this he might be disposed to pay to a really "Catholic-minded" and "properly appointed Bishop," he cannot possibly pay to one who is only "the nominee of the Prime Minister," and has neither "the learning nor the piety," nor "the Catholic sympathies" which alone would justify the obedience of a truly Catholic priest. Does his Bishop, in reply, remind him that he is not asking him to obey his directions only, but to obey the plain and clear law of the Church of England, his answer is either that the Church of England has not expressly forbidden the practices in question, and that he is entitled to do or say anything in public service which is not expressly forbidden; or, if this cannot be alleged, he asserts that these practices have been forbidden only in the Court of the Metropolitan,

whose judgment he cannot possibly acknowledge, inasmuch as he sits there "accompanied by a lay assessor," or else by the Committee of the Privy Council, whose decisions are for him simply so much waste-paper. Or, should what he is doing be a clear violation of some rubric, the purport of which has never been so much as questioned, the answer is still forthcoming that the rubrics being only those of a local Church, he must decline to obey them until they can be proved to him not to be opposed to the only law he acknowledges, viz., that of the Church Catholic of which he is a priest—a condition, which, as he is himself to be the sole judge of the sufficiency of the proof, does not, certainly, much restrain his liberty of action, and which amounts, in plain English, to the declaration, that he means to do precisely what he pleases, and that for him the promise—"I will use the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, and none other"—means, "I will *not* use that form, and I *will* use any other that may commend itself to my judgment or strike my fancy." Finally, if his Bishop, having exhausted every effort of remonstrance, counsel, and even of entreaty, proceeds at last to enforce the law and discipline of the Church of which he is a Chief Pastor, he is met by an indignant cry of tyranny and persecution, and fierce accusations of attempting to stamp out the liberties of the Catholic priesthood; followed, probably, by a denunciation of the hateful union between Church and State, by virtue of which, nevertheless, and of the legal status it gives him, this much aggrieved priest alone possesses the legal power to defy his Bishop.

It would be wasting your time and my own to spend any words in refuting this most extraordinary theory of the absolute independence of the presbyterate of our Church; for it is clear that this phase, at least, of the

so-called Catholic movement can be but a passing one. No Church, no organized body whatever, could long continue to exist which tolerated such chaotic licence as this. But we may be allowed to remind those who are thus defying all law and order whatsoever, that the almost certain result of their proceedings will be the loss of those very liberties which they are thus abusing. Whether this movement ends, as its more advanced leaders desire, in reconciliation with Rome, that is to say, in submission to the Papacy,—for Rome will have us on her terms, and not on ours; or in the disestablishment for which they are clamouring, that is to say, in the substitution for the fixed laws to which the clergy are now subject, the ever-varying rule of the will of the majority enforced in State Courts, on the ground of contract, far more stringently than our present laws enforce, on the ground of correction and discipline; or, as is far the most probable, in some sharp and sweeping reform of our present laws ecclesiastical which will give to the laity of the Church new powers for enforcing their wishes in matters of ritual and discipline;—in whichever of these results the present lawlessness ends, it will be one which will leave very little of their present freedom to the parochial clergy of our Church. Perhaps the more impatient spirits amongst us, now fretting under episcopal tyranny and bondage to the State, might then discover that the tyranny of a congregation is worse than that of a Bishop; that law is the only true safeguard of freedom: and, that those were not after all the best friends of the liberties of the clergy, who encouraged them to disobey, but those who exhorted them to obey the laws of their own Church.

There is no need, however, to discuss the truth of that theory of Catholicity by which these lawless proceedings

are justified,* inasmuch as it is expressly and formally repudiated by our Church.† So far from asserting the infallibility of General Councils, she categorically denies it. "General Councils," she declares, "may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God." So far from admitting her subjection to their decrees "in things necessary to salvation," she declares that these "have neither strength nor authority," unless it may be declared (*i.e.* clearly shown) that they be "taken out of Holy Scripture."‡ Even the Creeds she receives, not because they have the authority of Councils nor yet of Catholic consent, but because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture,"§ the one only absolutely infallible and supreme authority in matters of faith which she recognises. In matters of ritual her assertion of her own independent and inherent authority is even more clear and emphatic. "Every particular or National Church," she maintains, "hath authority to ordain, change, or abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church" (*i.e.* of the Church Catholic) "ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."‖ And in her preface "Of ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained," she still more clearly and fully asserts this right, while defining the conditions under which she exercises it. One rule, and one only, she there lays down, as that which is to regulate "all things done in the Church," in "ceremonials of human institution," and that is "edification." Whatever ceremonies, even though "originally of goodly intent and purpose devised," may have ceased to fulfil this end she claims the right to change, or, if needful, "to put away." This is a claim which goes to the root of the theory of Catholic

* See Note (A). † See Note (B). ‡ Article xxi.
§ Article viii. ‖ Article xxxiv.

assent as the rule of ritual; the most ancient and universal of rites—not having the authority of Holy Writ for its perpetual observance—becoming on this principle a mere *Nehushtan*,* a thing to be utterly abolished, if it should have become at any time so "abused to error or superstition" as that "the abuse could not be taken away, the thing itself remaining," The unity of the Catholic Church, therefore, clearly, according to the teaching of our Church, does not consist either in a central infallible authority or in the identity of any rites or ceremonies not expressly enjoined in Scripture, but in the common possession by many independent Churches of the four unities—of the Faith, the Word, the sacraments, and the divinely appointed ministry. To reject or to lose any one of these would be to sever herself from the Church Catholic. But short of this, she claims most clearly and unhesitatingly the right of every Church National to self-government and self-reform in all things pertaining to edification. And it was in the vindication for her of this her truly "Catholic heritage" of self-rule, subject only to the authority of God's Word, that the Reformation was of such vital importance to our Church.

It were a bold thing to say that on every point in which that great change made her to differ from the Church of Rome, she carried away absolutely all the truth and Rome only all the error. But one great vital truth the Reformation did re-assert for her distinctly and precisely, and that was the freedom and independence of National Churches; delivering her thereby thoroughly, and let us hope for ever, from the "grasp of the dead hand" of the past, to which the so-called Catholic theory would once more subject her, to the utter paralyzing of her free

* 2 Kings xviii. 4.

national life, and to the practical denial of the continued presence in her of her Lord.

Exaggeration of the National Element.

But all-important as is this assertion of the inherent rights of the Church National, it may in its turn be pushed too far. We may easily pass from denying the infallible authority of General Councils to denying them any authority, *i.e. auctoritas*, or weight whatsoever; or, from denying that an absolutely Catholic assent can ever be so ascertained as to be dogmatically binding, to forgetting that the general adoption of any practice by the undivided Church must always be a strong presumption in its favour, not to be set aside, but on the still stronger ground of that *salus populi*, which, as we have seen, is the *suprema lex* of our Church. Or we may so exalt the idea of the Church National as to lose sight of, or even to deny, the existence of the visible Church Catholic. We may, in our recoil from the error of asserting a false centre of unity for the Catholic Church, pass into the extreme of asserting that it has no objective or historical unity whatever, and that the only unity of Christ's Church is the inward unity of the Spirit which joins individual Christians with each other and with Him. Churches being on this theory simply those external forms into which the religion of individual Christians has, as it were, accidentally crystallized, can claim, as of right, no authority over their members, who, in the freedom of the Spirit, must have the right to recast their own organization, to form themselves into entirely new bodies, as often they may think proper. Every such body, though but of yesterday, has an equal right to the title and the authority of a Church. Nay, each individual member of such a body is on this theory quite competent in his turn to set up a new and equally true Church for himself. Thus the assertion

of the independence of National Churches, unlimited by the recognition of visible Catholic unity, ends in the very "dissidence of dissent"; the stream of Catholic order and doctrine sinking at last into the sands of the merest Individualism.

Such are, as it seems to me, the logical results of the denial of the existence of the visible Church Catholic. And though we should be far from charging those amongst us who hold this theory with aiming at the results which logically flow from it, we cannot but recognize in their history tendencies in that direction. We can see these, I think, in the depreciation of those two links with the Church Catholic which appertain most to the idea of the corporate life of the Church, viz., the ministry and the sacraments; in the denial of the Apostolic succession of the one and in the understating, if not the denial, of the grace and the efficacy of the latter; in the undue depreciation of all the objective side of our religion as "merely outward form and ceremony," and the undue exaltation of all that is purely subjective; in the lightly regarding the sin of schism, provided only that the schismatic retain those particular doctrines which subjectively unite him with Evangelical Churchmen; in the fraternising with dissenting communities, as "other Churches," and holding out to them as communities, what God forbid we should deny them as individuals, the "right hand of fellowship"; in an impatience of that fulnesss of doctrinal statement and breadth of comprehensiveness in which consists the true doctrinal Catholicity of our Church, and in a consequent readiness to narrow within the limits of one school of thought the broad stream of Catholic doctrine which, just because it is full, must touch both its banks almost to overflowing. In a word, a tendency towards Sectarianism within the Church, and towards

alliance with Sectarianism outside it, warns us that our Church is exposed to dangers from ultra-Puritanism as well as from ultra-Catholicism.

Exaggeration of the Secular Element.

Once more; we recognize the existence amongst us of a third school of thought that, like the other two, asserts a great truth which yet, without its due limits, leads to perilous error. Erastianism is but the exaggeration of the truth—never to be forgotten, never more needing to be remembered than at this moment—that the State as well as the Church is a Divine thing; is truly, if in a lower degree, and for lower purposes, ordained of God; and has therefore its true and real relations to Him and to His Diviner Kingdom the Church; that it is not, therefore, to be regarded, as extreme High Churchmen and Dissenters agree in regarding it, as an unclean thing from which the Church is to stand utterly apart in holy separation, with which any union whatever on her part is nothing short of spiritual adultery, but rather as, in its ideal at least, a holy thing truly consecrated to God with which a union on the part of the Church is not adultery, but lawful and sanctifying alliance; and that so far from such union being necessarily the degradation or the injury of either, it may be the highest form of existence for both. For one I am not ashamed to confess that I believe this theory—nay, that I believe it to be one most wholesome and necessary for these times, as the strongest protest against that most pernicious modern heresy, that the secular and the spiritual are things not only separable, but always to be separated. In their protest against this error, I am persuaded that the so-called Erastians do the Church a great service.

But this assertion of the Divine origin, and therefore of the religious idea of the State, needs to be tempered

by the strongest and clearest assertion of the Divine origin and authority, the Divine rights and privileges of the Church. If not, there is the danger, nay the certainty of the Church coming to be regarded as simply a function of the State—its mere creature and servant—to be moulded and remoulded at its pleasure. The clergyman, on this theory, is simply a kind of moral policeman, hired by the State to keep the people moral and obedient to the law, and whose duty it is accordingly to tell them from Sunday to Sunday to be good. His doctrines however, that is to say his reasons why people should be good, must be subject to alteration from time to time as the State may think best, just as she might alter the weapons or accoutrements of her soldiers. While as to his holding his office and his right to teach by virtue of a higher authority than that of the State—as to his being an officer of a mightier and higher Kingdom than any earthly one, having not only eternal and unchangeable truth to teach and supernatural gifts and graces to convey, but having the rights and privileges of this Kingdom to maintain against any earthly power whatever—this is regarded as sacerdotal bigotry and presumption, only to be tolerated by a liberal State so far as it is restrained by law within limits that make it practically harmless, but which must from time to time be warned of the peril of asserting itself too plainly, and reminded that if the Church is to remain established she must learn to be less dogmatic, and to put herself more in accord with the "liberal and enlightened spirit of the age."

And though we should be as far as possible from charging all of this school of thought with aiming at these results, yet we cannot fail to see amongst them tendencies in this direction—demands, for instance, for the abolition of all doctrinal tests for admission to the ministry of our

Church; complaints of the too dogmatic character of our Creeds; proposals for the admission of any one and every one, schismatic, heretic, or unbeliever to her pulpits, or to a share in councils which are to regulate the minutest details of her worship; attempts at still further relaxing her discipline, already far too lax; all put forward under the attractive and doubtless the honest plea of preserving the Establishment by widening the basis of our Church, and so making her more truly national. All these seem to me tainted with the same error, and fraught with the same peril; the error of supposing that our Church is national because she is Established, the peril of destroying her really national character without saving her Establishment. I say without saving her Establishment, for after all this exists because she is believed to have some definite truth to teach to the nation. Once let it be clearly understood that she really has nothing particular to say to the people, while any other religious body might say that nothing with just as much authority as she possesses—that in short she has only to tell them that it does not much matter what they believe, provided that they only believe that it does not matter—and the English people will have less common-sense than they are generally given credit for, if they fail to draw the conclusion that it is hardly worth while maintaining an Establishment for this.

Thus we see how each of these three parties in our Church, working out its own distinctive principle to its logical conclusion, ends actually in destroying the very thing for which it is contending. The Catholic, aiming at the unity of Catholic consent, ends in the wildest licence of private judgment. The Protestant, aiming at the independence of the National Church, ends by resolving

this Church into a multitude of sects. The Establishmentarian, aiming at the security of a Church established by law, ends in the certain destruction of the Establishment he seeks to preserve. Each of these, in fact, needs the assistance of the other to maintain his own position in the English Church. The Catholic cannot defend his position against the arguments of Romanism until he has learned to limit his extreme theory of a visible Catholic unity by that assertion of the rights and independence of the National Church which he has denounced as Protestantism. The Protestant Churchman can never hold his ground against the arguments of the Dissenter without the recognition of that idea of a visible Catholic Church which he denounces as Popery. The Establishmentarian can never defend the Establishment against the arguments of the Rationalist until he recognises the fact that the true comprehensiveness of our Church consists in her Catholicity, and that inclusion, however wide you may make the limits of the enclosure, implies something to be excluded as well as something to be included. In truth, each of these parties, little as it might be disposed to own it, has learned, is learning, much from the other two. There is more of Evangelicalism in the High Churchman, more of High Church principle in the Evangelical, more of dogma in the Broad Churchman than would flow from their own avowed principles, but which comes for each from the influence of those to whom he is most opposed. Candid and earnest men of all parties are learning to recognise this more and more; are coming to understand that it is not given to any one school, or to any one age, any more than to any one man, to see truth on all sides; but that it is rather by the assertion, the necessarily one-sided assertion, of different aspects of truth, that the whole body of the truth can be preserved. And so each

comes in turn, not only to endure, but to value the presence of the other in the Church, to feel that there is an appointed and an important work for each one of them to do, which can be done by that one only. And thus while extreme men on either side are pushing their views to extreme lengths, standing as far apart as possible, denouncing each other so loudly and so bitterly that it might be thought the Church must speedily be torn asunder by their strife, the Church herself—larger, wider, greater than any one of the parties within her—may be gaining from their very strife a larger and a firmer grasp of the truths of which she is the guardian—a clearer perception of the limits beyond which her children may not safely stray; the very errors and excesses of each party, their very shipwrecks of the Faith, sad as they are to see, serving to buoy out on the right hand and on the left the deep mid-channel of the Church's course. It is to this growth of a sound and loyal Churchmanship—taught in turn and learned in turn by each of the great parties in our Church—that we must look under God for her safe passage through the troubled waters on which she is now tossing. No laws, however stringent, no prosecutions, however frequent, will without this preserve the purity of the Church. Disloyal men will always contrive to come just within that hair's-breadth of law-breaking which every prosecution enables them the better to discern. Once let this spirit of disloyalty, therefore, be generally prevalent and laws will be of little use; and, on the other hand, let but a spirit of loyalty prevail, and occasional breaches of the law, however flagrant, will have no lasting ill effects. I do not mean to say that these are not to be repressed or punished. I do not forget that laws which are never enforced must fall into general contempt; but I do say that it is not to the penal enforce-

ment of law, however necessary that may be, but to the loyalty of Churchmen we must mainly look for the deliverance of our Church from perils even greater than those through which she is now passing. "*Dilige et fac quod voles*" is the true spirit of all Church legislation. Our Church cannot safely tolerate, she ought not to tolerate for a single day, those "wilful and contemptuous transgressions" of her order and discipline which spring from hatred of her essential principles and disloyal denial of her claims on the obedience of her own children; but she can and ought to bear much and long with the errors of her loving sons, who, truly loyal to her authority and honestly desirous of acting in the spirit of her teaching, err, when they do err, but from excess of zeal for her honour and for her greater success in her great work in winning souls for her Lord and Master.

Only in this spirit of loyalty to our own Church and of brotherly charity towards each other can we encounter the perils of our day. Only thus shall we escape at once the bitter and estranging suspicion which aggravates each minor difference into a heresy, and the weak spirit of compromise which fears to recognize the reality and the extent of our greater differences. We cannot, if we are true to our own convictions, sink, as it is phrased, our differences. On the contrary, we must recognise them, utter them, and very often act on them. Nevertheless, we may believe that in spite of these—nay, by means of these—the ever present Spirit of God may be leading us all on to higher forms of Christian life and deeper views of Christian truth. In this spirit, let us endeavour to deal with each one of the questions that divide us now, or may divide us hereafter; seeking, praying, resolving that our inevitable controversies shall be carried out, at once so honestly and so lovingly, that neither by our lack

of faithfulness shall the Church suffer loss of truth, nor by our lack of charity shall she suffer loss of unity.

The Athanasian Creed.

It is in this spirit that I would fain hope we may yet be enabled to deal with what seems at this moment to be one of the gravest questions which have arisen since the Reformation; I mean the present controversy as to our use of the Athanasian Creed. Not unwillingly would I have avoided this topic, on which I know that the views I have already expressed differ widely from those most dearly cherished by many amongst you whom I love and honour. And yet had I done so, I do not believe that I should really have promoted our unity as a Diocese, and that—not merely because my silence would certainly not have prevented or lessened a controversy which pervades our whole Church—but because it would necessarily wear in your eyes the appearance of regarding this question as one of so irritating a nature that I must shun it in my intercourse with you. I have no such fear. I do not, and I pray that I never may, fear to speak in your presence with fullest frankness and clearness, what, as before God, I believe to be true. Besides, you have a right, my reverend brethren, to expect from your Bishop a distinct utterance on such a question as this, and you would hold, I am sure, that one thing would be far worse than any amount of error in what I might say respecting it—namely, the cautious cowardice that refused to say anything at all. Let me, then, say what appear to me to be the present aspect and probable issue of this controversy respecting the Athanasian Creed.

In the first place, then, I would observe that, wide and deep as are the differences that divide us on the subject of this Creed, there are some points, at least, on which we are all rapidly coming to an agreement. One of these

is that the controversy has reached a stage at which it cannot possibly stop. For good or for evil, it has worked itself to this point, that the Creed, with its accompanying rubrics, will not remain exactly as it is. Some concession, it is now clear, will be made to the scruples, reasonable or unreasonable, of those who feel their consciences burdened by the use of the Creed, exactly "as it is and where it is." Its extremest defenders are, for the most part, willing to go in this direction the length, at least, of an explanatory rubric, or a synodical declaration as to its meaning; neither of which, certainly, would leave the Creed exactly "as it is," though they would leave it "where it is" in our Prayer-Book. Another point on which we are all fast agreeing is this—that no one proposed solution of this question can be regarded as perfectly free from serious difficulties or objections; that so far from these solutions being, any one of them, "small changes" of trifling import, they, every one of them, really involve questions of principle, running far and deep under the very foundations of our Church; and that, therefore, settle it how we may, there can be no settlement of the question which will not demand, on one side or another, some sacrifice of strongly-cherished preference, if not of conviction. One thing more I think we have gained by the discussion of the last six months, and that is that we have got rid of certain minor questions which arose, as they are sure to arise at the beginning of every great controversy, and which served only to obscure its real issue —questions, for instance, as to the date and authorship of the Creed, or as to certain minute improvements in the translation of it, which all are now agreed in regarding as almost, if not altogether, immaterial. And amongst these, let us hope, may ere long be classed the still more irrelevant questions as to the motives and aims of the dis-

putants on either side, of which this controversy has already had, at least, its full share. Railing accusations on the one hand of "dishonesty," "profligacy," "immorality," "shameless baseness," "treachery to ordination and consecration vows," "hatred of all definite religion," "covert sympathy with scepticism" may, let us hope, be allowed to pair off with accusations on the other side of "clerical bigotry," "priestly arrogance and intolerance," and "delight in the idea of the perdition of those who differ from us." Hysterical exclamations of this kind serve the cause of truth as little as they do that of charity, and we may agree to dismiss them from our minds with only the expression of a hope that the authors of these latest damnatory clauses may yet be enabled to read them with such explanatory rubrics as their calmer and better reason may suggest.

Setting aside, then, all such minor and really irrelevant considerations as these, two questions, and only two, as it seems to me, stand out clear and distinct from all the rest as those on which the decision of this controversy must ultimately turn: First, has the Church of England the right to touch the Athanasian Creed at all? Secondly, assuming that she has this right, is there any sufficient reason why she should exercise it? It is clear that if either of these questions be decided in the negative, there is practically an end of the whole controversy. And it is equally clear that, until they have both been decided in the affirmative, it is premature, and, what is more, it is extremely confusing to discuss any particular mode of dealing with the Creed.

The first of these questions is, obviously, one of those conflicts of principle of which I have just been speaking. It is really a question between the rights and authority

of the Church National and the Church Catholic. Those who protest against any dealing whatever, or, as they would say, any tampering with the Athanasian Creed by our Church, do so on the express ground that all such dealings are for her *ultra vires*. They remind us that the Creed is one of the creeds of the Church Catholic; a part therefore of the *depositum Fidei* "divinely given to our Church," of which she is only the guardian, and of which she may not therefore alter so much as a letter without proving faithless to her trust, and without "severing herself from the unity of Catholic Christendom."

To this assertion it might be replied, that whatever degree of truth it might have as regards the Nicene Creed, it is not true of the Athanasian, which has neither the authority of any General Council, nor, in the form in which we receive it, the acceptance of the Church Universal. Granting, however, that the Athanasian Creed stood exactly on the same footing as the "Niceno-Constantinopolitan," would the Anglican Church have therefore no right to alter so much as a letter of it? Those who say so must either assert the infallibility of General Councils, which our Church expressly denies, or they must prove, as they certainly cannot prove, that even the Nicene Creed, as we receive it, possesses that literal totality of Catholic consent to which alone even the claim for infallibility attaches. Or if, granting that the Creed is not of infallible authorship, they assert only that it is true, *i.e.* expresses the true Catholic faith and that to alter it, therefore, in the very least degree, implies a severance from Catholic unity, they have to show that unity of faith is necessarily the same thing with literal identity of creed; so completely and absolutely the same thing that the least variation of verbal expression neces-

sarily implies loss of unity. If this be so, we must be prepared to admit that Western Christendom is no longer at one with the ancient Catholic Church, inasmuch as without Catholic consent it has altered the Nicene Creed by the addition of the *Filioque* clause ; and we must further admit that previous to the first General Council the Church had no true unity of Faith, inasmuch as all the different local Churches—though agreeing in the substance of the Faith—did not express that Faith in literally identical Creeds. But if we are not prepared to say this, then we must, I think, admit that less than Catholic consent may warrant the alteration even of the Creed of a General Council ; and that a Church local, by such alteration, does not necessarily sever herself from Catholic unity —provided always that the alteration does not amount to the corruption or denial of any article of the Faith, in the oneness of which, and not in the exact and literal identity of the terminology in which it is expressed, true Catholic unity consists.

Be this, however, as it may, it is at least clear that our Church asserts for herself the right to alter the Creeds, when she declares as her only reason for receiving them that "they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture." In these words her assent, and, therefore, the continuance of it, is conditioned on one thing and one thing only—her conviction of the agreement of these Creeds with Scripture. Her right to assent on the ground of Scriptural proof clearly implies her right to dissent on the ground of Scriptural disproof. Unless, indeed, we maintain that, having once assented to the Creeds on the ground of their accordance with Holy Writ, she may never reconsider this assent ; an assertion which could only be justified on the ground that the Church of England not only claims to be, but is, infallible

—which certainly will not be alleged by those who deny her right to deal with the Creeds. Of course, it is another and a very different question whether she should ever attempt to exercise the right she thus claims. Like all other rights, this can only be exercised under penalties for the misuse of it; under most tremendous penalties in the case of the Creeds. Nevertheless, she does most distinctly claim this right. She does, by implication, most distinctly assert that in her capacity of guardian for her children of the Faith—which is not necessarily the same thing with being guardian of the Creeds—she has the right, though at her own peril, to modify the Creeds, or any part of them, as God's Word shall seem to her to require.

Assuming, however, that the Church of England possesses the right to deal with the Athanasian Creed, there still remains, as I have just said, that other and far different question, whether there be any *sufficient* reason why she should do so. I say sufficient reason, because I do most deeply feel, with the defenders of this Creed, that it is not a light thing for our Church to meddle with a confession of Faith so ancient, so justly dear to thousands of her most faithful and devoted members; and, that the onus, therefore, lies on those who advocate any change to show not only that there is some reason—nay, even that there are many and weighty reasons for the change—but that these are more and weightier than those that may be urged against it. This is really the question we have to decide, and a most difficult and anxious one it is—a question so difficult and anxious that I for one could earnestly have wished that it had not been raised in our day. But now that it has been raised, now that we must meet it with such measure of wisdom and courage as God may vouchsafe us, I feel just as strongly that we can only deal with

it safely in a spirit of strictest faithfulness, each one of us, to our own convictions, leaving the issue to Him who has brought His Church through graver perils and sorer difficulties than this.

Before stating, however, the reasons which appear to me to call for some change in the use or the wording of this Creed, let me first state, that there are reasons given for change with which I have no sympathy whatever. I can see no reasonableness in the objections that are urged against the Creed, on the ground either of the mysteriousness of its subject matter, or the subtlety of its definitions, or the alleged obsoleteness of the heresies it denounces. As to mystery, it is of the essence of the Faith. The subject of the Faith is God, and of Him we cannot speak at all without uttering mysteries. That God is One is a proposition as truly mysterious as the proposition that He is Three in One. And if ever the Deist were to attempt to compose a Creed which should exclude what for him are the heresies of Pantheism and Atheism, he could only do so by definitions far more subtle than those by which we fence the doctrine of the Trinity. The subtlety of these definitions is the necessary result of the subtlety of the heresies they oppose. These definitions are subtle and intricate, much in the same way that the thorns of a fence are thick-set and sharp; it is only those who strive to break into, or out of, the fence who feel their sharpness. As to obsolete heresies, the heresies defined in the Creed are not obsolete, even in England, to say nothing of those other countries in which the Anglican Church recites it. On the contrary, I fear that we might find amongst those who believe themselves perfectly orthodox, no small number of Tritheists, Sabellians, and Apollinarians. Most precious, therefore, do I believe each one of

the great dogmatic definitions of this Creed to be; and most deeply should I regret the loss to our Church of so great a safeguard of the Catholic Faith, which would result from her ceasing to repeat these in her public services. Nor, again, can I agree with the objection that this Creed is uncharitable because it warns us of the peril of unbelief. On the contrary, I hold most firmly that man's responsibility for his belief is as clearly taught in Scripture as his responsibility for his conduct, and that to warn him of this responsibility is to warn him not only truly but charitably. I am as strongly opposed as the most strenuous defender of this Creed can be to the heresy of indifferentism which would remove from our Faith that element of holy and loving severity, which no false charity should ever induce us to surrender or to weaken.

Nor lastly do I think that a change should be made in the use of the Creed, simply because its use is distasteful to very many members of our Church. It is not the first duty of the Church to *please* her children. It is her first duty to *teach* them, and to teach them all of Divine truth she knows, and that whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. And I cannot, therefore, too strongly deprecate the attempts that are being made to influence the decision of this question by threats, on one side or the other, of what certain members of our Church will do, if it be not decided exactly in the way they desire,—threats, for instance, on the one hand, of "the laity taking the matter into their own hands" if their demands are not promptly complied with, and on the other hand, of secession, or of "joining the Liberation Society," if they are. Such threats in the columns of newspapers seem to savour more of political agitation than of Christian counsel and deliberation. Certainly, had the Church feared like threats in times past, we never should have had the Creeds.

Let us hope, too, that our Church may not be influenced in her deliberations on this question by a consideration which has been much argued of late, namely, that if we once begin to touch this Creed there is no saying where we may stop. If we alter the Athanasian Creed, it is said, why not the Nicene? Why not the Apostles' Creed? If we touch the damnatory clauses, shall we ultimately retain even those which assert the Trinity and the Incarnation? Have those who thus speak utterly forgotten our Lord's promise to be with His Church always, even to the end of the world? Do they realise the fact that He is with us now in this nineteenth century, as truly and as closely present as He was with His Church in the fourth, or in the sixth, or in any other century? And if He be so present, why should we fear to trust Him with the future of His own Church? Why should we fear that if in faithfulness to the light He gives us we seek more truly to define, or better to guard, the Faith He has entrusted to us, we shall be punished for our faithfulness by being suffered to wander into all error instead of being guided, as He has promised we shall be, into all truth? Let us take care that in our dread of the heresies denounced in this Creed, we do not fall into one of the most perilous of all heresies—the practical denial of the living, guiding, guarding presence of our Lord with His Church now as well as in past times, hereafter as well as now.

One consideration, and one only, will I trust be allowed by our Church ultimately to decide this question, and it is this: Is every sentence, is every phrase, in this creed, not only true, but truth expressed in its truest and best form? If so "*cadit quæstio*," there is no longer room for considerations of expediency or of charity. Truth, however stern or severe it may seem to be, is the highest charity, and its fullest proclamation the truest expediency.

If, however, the Church, after due and calm deliberation, should be led to the conclusion that any sentence in this Creed is either not true, or is truth so imperfectly or unguardedly expressed as to lead to error, then I pray that she may have the courage and the faithfulness to her trust to alter or remove that sentence, spite of all threats or warnings of consequences on the one side or the other.

As regards the truth of this Creed, our Church clearly stands pledged to it by her eighth Article. And so do all those who have subscribed that Article, so long as it remains unaltered and so long as they retain the offices which they have obtained on condition of that subscription—a fact which, if any of us had been tempted to forget, we have been abundantly reminded of lately. The question, however, is not whether the doctrines set forth in this Creed are true and may be proved so "by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture," but whether they in every instance set forth truth in its clearest and truest form; whether, for instance, from original ambiguity of expression, from the context in which they stand, from the insensible change in the meaning of words which comes with lapse of time and is inherent in human speech, some of the expressions in this Creed do not appear to mean that which cannot "be proved by Holy Writ" to be "necessary to salvation." To say that this is so is perfectly consistent with affirming the substantial truth of the doctrines contained in the Creed. Is there one of us teachers and preachers who has not had occasion to say of some statement—his own or another's—There is a sense in which this is undoubtedly true and is capable of being proved from the Bible, and yet it seems to me harshly and crudely expressed; it is almost certain, unless guarded and qualified somewhat, to be misunderstood and to do mischief; it might be better expressed thus or thus,

or might even be better omitted from its present context, which tends to obscure and pervert its meaning? Surely, if we may say this of our own or one another's teaching without thereby affirming the falsehood of what we thus censure, the Church may lawfully say, and we may lawfully ask her to say this, if need be, of her teachings, while yet we admit and affirm those teachings to be in their substance true.

Is it, then, the fact that there are certain expressions in the Athanasian Creed, which make it appear to affirm "as necessary to salvation" more than Scripture warrants? Certainly no one will deny that there are a very large number of persons who are firmly persuaded that there are such. What these persons say is this: "We are required when we recite the Athanasian Creed to say; first, that except a man 'do keep the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled'—'whole,' that is, without the loss of the minutest part; 'undefiled,' that is, without the intrusion of any, even the slightest error—he shall 'without doubt perish everlastingly.'* Next, we are required to affirm, that the Catholic Faith consists in a series of propositions which are set forth at great length and with great minuteness of detail, ending with this affirmation, which, coming at the end of them all, seems to include each and every one of these propositions: 'This is the Catholic Faith; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.' It seems to us, therefore, that inasmuch as any one who denies or imperfectly apprehends any one of these propositions has not kept the Faith whole or undefiled, every such person 'cannot be saved.' That is to say, we are required to affirm, not only of the Nestorian, Eutychian,

* Surely this sentence is a sentence of condemnation on individuals, though it is not a final sentence on any particular individual. "*Quis*" is a person, and not a doctrine; and yet we are told that "the Church in this Creed only condemns doctrines, not individuals."

Apollinarian, but of those who deny, or who do not rightly receive, the doctrine of the Double Procession, of Christ's descent into hell, of the resurrection of the bodies of the dead, or of everlasting punishment—nay, of those who do not believe faithfully the damnatory clauses which are a part of this Creed, and, therefore of the Catholic Faith—that is to say, all those who do not believe that certain other persons cannot be saved—that such cannot themselves be saved; and this 'without doubt,' without there being any room even for that doubtful hope which might leave such persons to the uncovenanted mercies of God."

Now, I do not affirm—I am as far as possible from affirming—that those who say this are right in all this their interpretation of the Creed; I am only stating the simple and undeniable fact that hundreds and thousands of persons do persistently affirm this to be, for them, the most obvious and most natural meaning of the words of the Creed. And what is more, that they affirm this, after they have heard all the explanations and qualifications which are offered by those who maintain that this is neither its true nor its most obvious meaning. When you have told them that the Church in the Creed "pronounces, and means to pronounce no judgment on individuals"; that the damnatory clauses are only "general warnings of the peril of unbelief," and mean no more than such general warnings mean in Holy Scripture, and that if we accept these we cannot refuse to accept those; that the words "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" mean only, without doubt he belongs to a class of persons who are in danger of perishing everlastingly; that the words, "this is the Catholic Faith" apply only to certain propositions in the Creed, which are of the essence of the Faith, and not to certain others which are merely expositions of it and which properly should be enclosed in parentheses;

when all this has been said, their answer is, "All that you say may be true; it may be that the Creed should be read with all these qualifications and explanations that you supply, though some of them appear to us subtle and far-fetched, and some of them even questionable; it may be that with the help of these the Creed may yield the sense you give it. All we say is that still this does not seem to us its most obvious and literal sense; it is not that sense which nine out of ten who recite it attach to it. And if this be its true sense, it is much to be desired that it were expressed more clearly; that those meanings, for instance, which you give to certain expressions in it were substituted for them, and that we were not called on as we are now to make a severe mental effort of theological reasoning and defining before we can take the words in the sense in which you tell us they ought to be taken." Now, if it be the fact that hundreds and thousands of most attached members of our Church are saying this, what is the sense of telling them that they are, one and all of them, including some of the most eminent, most learned, and most pious of our clergy and laity—men as capable, certainly, of understanding the meaning of theological terms as their accusers—that they are one and all of them ignorant persons, perversely incapable of understanding the meaning of the plainest propositions? Let us grant that they are so, and what does that prove? Simply this; that there are expressions in this Creed so worded as to be inevitably misunderstood by large numbers of those who are required to recite them; that, spite of every explanation that can be offered, these words appear to these persons to have, as their first and most literal meaning, precisely that sense which a large number of other persons affirm that they have not and cannot possibly have. Can there be put into words a stronger

argument for considering, at least, whether these expressions—confessedly so generally misunderstood—are not ambiguously expressed, and might not be made to convey more clearly that meaning which all agree in saying that they ought to convey? Surely, the more ignorant and the more perverse they are who, as it is alleged, thus misunderstand the Creed, the more reason there is in common charity for not putting needless difficulties in the way of their ignorance or giving needless strength to their perversity. It is the blind in whose path we are forbidden to cast stumbling-blocks; it is the lame whom we are forbidden to turn out of the way.

This reason, however, for reconsidering those expressions in the Athanasian Creed which are thus, it is alleged, so generally misunderstood, becomes much stronger when we turn from the objections of those who, we are told, utterly misunderstand them, to the explanations of those who claim, not only truly to understand them, but to understand them in their only true and literal sense. Certainly, we should expect from such persons an explanation of these misinterpreted passages which should be, not only clear and definite, but unanimous. Certainly, we should not expect to hear from them a great variety of explanations, differing and even contradictory. And yet this is exactly what we do hear. We find that the defenders of the integrity of the Creed, when they come to tell us what it really does mean, differ, not only as to the scope and intent of the damnatory clauses, but as to the meaning of nearly every word they contain. We are told, for instance, that "there is no *Anathema sit* in any of the Creeds;" and we are told, "that a Creed necessarily implies an anathema—tacit, if not express." We are told "that the damnatory clauses apply only to the rejection of certain fundamental doctrines in the Creed, and

that the others, being introduced by way of argument and illustration, are not obligatory"; and we are told that, as Bishop Pearson says, "the 'I believe' of a creed is diffused through every article and proposition of it;" and again, "that the admonitory clauses are a plain confession that *whatever a Creed of the Church contains* is certainly and infallibly true, *to be accepted as the condition of a man's everlasting salvation.*" We are told that *ante omnia* means—before all things "in the order of time," and that it means—before all things "in the order of necessity." We are told that *quicumque vult salvus esse*, means—"who would be in the safest way," not that there may not be "other less safe ways"; and we are told that it means—"he who would be saved from eternal perdition"; and again, that it means—"he who values soundness of mind"; nay we are told, that *in æternum peribit* may mean not that the unbeliever "shall perish everlastingly," but that "the Catholic Faith would, in that case, no doubt be lost to us for ever"! We are told that the admonitory clauses do not apply to cases of "involuntary ignorance or invincible prejudice"; and we are told that invincible prejudice may mean "an aggravated form of wickedness."

These are some of the differing and contradictory explanations of the damnatory clauses which I have gathered from a few only of the many pamphlets, sermons, and letters to which the controversy has given rise. How many more of these there may be I cannot say. I have cited enough to show that the meaning of these clauses is apparently so ambiguous that hardly any two of their most strenuous defenders can agree amongst themselves as to what they do mean. If, therefore, each one of these differing interpreters subscribes to them, as we are indignantly assured that they do, in their strict and literal

sense, it is clear that either the strict and literal meaning of these words is not perfectly obvious, or that they are so worded as to bear more than one obvious and strictly literal meaning. Surely, this again, is a strong, a very strong reason for considering whether language so variously interpreted may not be needlessly ambiguous, and may not be capable of clearer expression.

And if this clearer expression be possible, surely it is of all things most desirable; and that not merely because it is the duty of the Church to set forth the Faith in the clearest and least ambiguous form possible, but because this ambiguity in the case of clauses so tremendous as these damnatory clauses necessarily gives rise to two great evils—sophistical and casuistical explanations of these clauses on the one hand, and a violent reaction against all dogma on the other. When penalties so awful are attached to definitions so many and minute, and in words so capable either of exaggeration on the one hand, or of explanations which explain them away on the other, men are sorely tempted to take one or other of these courses according to their dispositions. They have taken them, they are taking them now, and it is hard to say which of them is the most fatal to all true religion, endangering as they do, the one all dogma, and the other all morality. I do not say that it may not be our duty to encounter this peril. We do and must encounter it as regards some of the words of God, which being His words and not ours, we may not dare to alter, and which we believe He has left thus doubtful for reasons known only to Himself. But these words of the Athanasian Creed are not God's words, they are man's words; and, therefore, before we accept, as regards them, this perilous alternative, we are clearly bound to see whether they may not be so expressed as to save us from it, or whether,

if they cannot be so expressed, they are not better omitted.

We are told, however, that these words are not man's words, that they are no more and no other than our Lord's own words; that the judgment they pronounce is not the Church's, but His; that she may not, therefore, and dare not, alter them. The Church, we are told, in declaring to her children the necessity of holding the Faith, ventures not to say other than "just what her Lord said"—"no less and no more."

Is this so? Are these damnatory clauses just what our Lord said—no less and no more?

Literally, of course, it is not so. No such words as the damnatory clauses were ever spoken by our Lord. To say that they are just what He said—no less and no more—is, therefore, one of those rhetorical amplifications too largely used in this controversy. All that it really means is that the words are so exact and true an equivalent of our Lord's words that they may be said to be His. This, however, to begin with, is a very bold thing to say of any human words whatever. The moment that we substitute for the very words of Christ, words that we think equivalent to His, in that moment we introduce the possibility of human error and infirmity. It is, to say the least, possible, it is not too much to say even probable, that our words may not mean exactly what His meant. It is, therefore, presumptuous to say that they must necessarily be exactly the same, and not only presumptuous, but uncharitable in the last degree, to accuse all those who doubt whether they are the same of a secret desire to deny His words.* Certainly, it appears to me nothing less than astounding that men should assert that, when our Lord said, "He that believeth not shall be

* See Note (C).

damned,"* He necessarily meant, he that keepeth not whole and undefiled every one of the statements in the Athanasian Creed—he, for instance, that believeth not that, "*as* the soul and flesh is one man, *so* God and man is one Christ," that is to say—he that denies, not the incarnation, but the correctness of a particular illustration of the incarnation—"shall be damned"; and further, that our Lord's words so necessarily and obviously mean "just this" that to doubt this is to doubt His words.

But are the words of the damnatory clauses manifestly and obviously the exact equivalent of our Lord's words? Is "not to keep the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled" the exact equivalent, or fair translation, of ὁ ἀπιστήσας? Is "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" the exact equivalent, or a fair rendering, of κατακριθήσεται?

To me they seem to be not merely not the equivalent of these words, but not even a true inference from them. When our Lord says—"He that believeth not shall be condemned," He does not say expressly what is that the non-belief of which entails condemnation. This is to be inferred from the context. When, therefore, we claim His authority for the damnatory clauses, we say, in effect, this: "We conclude from the context in which these words stand, that they mean—he that believeth not every article in the Athanasian Creed, shall perish everlastingly." Observe, we take, here, as it were, one step away from our Lord's own words, we have now got into the region of human, and, therefore, fallible inference. But is this a necessary inference from His words? Very far from it, as it seems to me. Our Lord—sending out His

* I have assumed in this argument that these words were spoken by our Lord. If they were not, I fully grant that there are other passages in Scripture quite as strongly worded as this.

Apostles to preach the Gospel to the heathen as the means and condition of salvation, says — "He that believeth" —*what?* *This Gospel*— "and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not"—what? The same Gospel—"shall be condemned."

The Gospel was the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and those who accept this Gospel, that is, who believe in Him as their Saviour and are baptized, He tells us "shall be saved." Baptism implies belief in the Name into which men are baptized. Clearly, then, according to our Lord's own statement, belief in the Trinity and acceptance of Christ as the Saviour of the sinner are the conditions of salvation under the new Covenant. And he that refuses these so utterly that he will not accept the Gospel and therefore will not be baptized, he, that is, who so utterly rejects Christianity that he will not become a Christian, he must be condemned. That is to say, our Lord's words, taken in their context, seem to apply, primarily, not to those within, but to those who, being without, refuse to come within the Church; and secondarily, by inference, to those who, having come within the Church so far apostatize from the Faith as that they could not—believing no more than they do—have been admitted to baptism.

Now, if this be the meaning of our Lord's words, then so far from the damnatory clauses being either just what He said or a necessary inference from what He said, they would be as nearly as possible the converse of what He said; His words applying primarily to those without, the damnatory clauses primarily to those within, the Church; His words affixing a penalty to rejection of all the Faith, the damnatory clauses affixing it to the loss of any, even the least part of it. In a word, the difference between the clauses and His words seems to me to be that

they affix to *misbelief*, even in the least degree, the penalty which He affixes to *unbelief* in the greatest degree.

Now, I am far from asserting that the interpretation I have just given for our Lord's words is certainly the true one. I only say that it is a perfectly possible interpretation of them, and that until not only this but every interpretation of our Lord's words, other than that given in the damnatory clauses, is shown to be untenable, we have no right to say that the damnatory clauses are "just what He said," no less and no more.

But we shall be told that misbelief concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation is really unbelief; for this reason, that he who does not rightly believe all the truth concerning Christ's nature is not really believing in Christ—that is, in the true and real Christ—but in a false Christ of his own devising, and, therefore, may truly be said "to believe not." But—not to insist on the point that there are articles in the Athanasian Creed which have no necessary connection with the doctrine either of the Trinity or the Incarnation, and yet which come within the scope of the damnatory clauses—I observe that we have here a new and distinct proposition, which does not so much as pretend to be an inference from our Lord's words. It is this: He who does not in all respects correctly apprehend the nature of the Being in whom he believes does not truly believe in Him. He that doth not keep whole and undefiled the Catholic Faith does not correctly apprehend the nature of Christ. Therefore, he that does not keep whole and undefiled the Catholic Faith does not truly believe in Christ.

Now, I will not ask whether this is just what our Lord said, or whether it is an inference, necessary or otherwise, from what He said, for it is clearly neither of these. But I ask, is this proposition so certainly and evidently true

that we may not only found on it the assertion of the peril of perdition to large classes of men, but the accusation of covert unbelief against whosoever questions this proposition? Is it true at all? To me it seems to bear a sad resemblance to such propositions as these. He who denies God's sovereignty and pre-destinating decrees does not rightly apprehend God's nature; therefore the Arminian who denies this does not truly believe in the true God, and, therefore, cannot be saved! Or this—The Calvinist who believes that God could create men for eternal perdition does not believe in the true God, and, therefore, cannot be saved! Or—The true worship of God is essential to salvation; Roman Catholics who worship saints and angels do not truly worship God; therefore, no Roman Catholic can be saved! Have none of you, my reverend brethren, heard or met with arguments such as these, and in what respect do they differ from that which I have stated above? What are they, one and all, but so many assertions that he who does not believe all necessary deductions from any doctrine does not believe the doctrine itself, or, in other words, that misbelief is always unbelief, and that the warnings attaching to the one attach necessarily to the other. Misbelief is not unbelief. It differs from it essentially in this, that it admits of degrees; the other does not All unbelief is sin, and is equally sin, whatever be the subject-matter of it; it is not a mistake, it is a *crime;* it is that hardening of the heart and contempt of God's Word, which not only ends in, but is, eternal death. Misbelief is not necessarily sin at all; it is a mistake and not a crime; it may, of course, lead on to unbelief, and here is its greatest peril; it always entails spiritual loss of some kind, and here is its necessary penalty; but it is not unbelief, nor does the penalty for unbelief attach to it.

But we shall be told—how often are we told!—that this is all that the damnatory clauses really do mean; that they do not condemn misbelief *as such*, but only where it is complicated with unbelief; that is to say, only where it is "wilful rejection of the Catholic Faith against light and knowledge." On this I have to observe, in the first place, that I am utterly unable to reconcile it with the plea made for the first clause in the Creed—*Quicumque vult salvus esse*—which we are told is "a declaration by the Church of the condition on which Almighty God grants salvation," namely, "correct faith in all who have it"; and that the Church in these words declares "that the only way of salvation she knows is the Catholic Faith." If so, then, surely, he who is out of that way is equally out of it whether he has strayed from it or has deliberately left it. Surely, if a certain medicine be absolutely essential to the recovery of a patient, he must, humanly speaking, as certainly die for want of taking it whether he wilfully refuse it or whether he mistake some other for it.

If, however, this be the real meaning of these clauses, then it is most unfortunate that they should so utterly fail to express it. There is no word in any one of them which so much as implies that wilful unbelief, and that only, is the peril against which they warn us. "Wilful rejection of the Catholic Faith" is neither the obvious nor the literal, nor even the necessarily implied meaning of "not keeping it whole and undefiled." Most certainly it is not one of those "qualifications with which all general propositions must be understood," and which "each person may and must be trusted to make for himself." It is a distinct and separate theological proposition, arbitrarily added to these words in order to qualify them, and neither necessarily implied in them nor to be inferred from them. Is it, then, too much to ask that, if the clauses are intended

to mean this, they should be so altered as to say this and this only, clearly and distinctly? Can there be a stronger condemnation of a minatory clause than that it fails so much as to allude to that one peril against which it is specially intended to warn us?

Furthermore, if these clauses are directed only against wilful unbelief then they are doubly misleading; because not only do they omit all mention of that unbelief against which they ought to warn us, but, standing as they do in closest connection with a long series of definitions of misbelief, they naturally and inevitably cause the impression that it is the things which *are* mentioned, and not that which is *not* mentioned, against which we are to be on our guard—that is to say, they divert the mind from the greater peril of an unbelieving heart to the far lesser peril of a misbelieving understanding. While, on the other hand, the qualification that only wilful *un*belief is condemned by the clauses tends to obscure the real though lesser peril of *mis*belief. In a word, these clauses, in their present wording and context, mean either too much or too little. Too much, if we take them as what they seem to be, warnings against misbelief only; too little, if we take them as what we are told they really are, warnings only against wilful unbelief.

Lastly; assuming that these clauses are only the very words of our Lord, it is not correct to say that *in the context in which they stand* they are only general warnings against unbelief. They are general warnings with a particular application added—namely, a list of certain classes or categories of errors, every one of which is asserted to come within the scope of these clauses. They are general clauses, therefore, only in the sense in which the major proposition of a syllogism is general, in order that from it

may be deduced by the help of the minor, a particular conclusion. They are general in the sense in which the words of a statute are general until limited and applied by the interpretation clauses. When we say, "he that hath not the Son, hath not life," we assert a general proposition. But when we add to this, as we have seen we must add to it, this minor proposition—The Nestorian and the Eutychian, and he that denies the Double Procession, or the descent into hell, or the resurrection of our bodies, "hath not the Son," we necessarily arrive at the particular conclusion, such persons "have not life." It is, therefore, simply idle to talk only of the general warnings of Scripture, when we place these warnings in a context in which they necessarily cease to be general and become special and particular. And let me add on this point, that what really needs proof in the above syllogism is not its major premise, on which so much superfluous demonstration has been wasted, but the minor; namely, that the Nestorian, or the Eutychian, or the Apollinarian, or he who denies the descent into hell, or the resurrection of our bodies, "hath not the Son." For this I should like to see some more cogent proof than has yet been brought. Certainly, it is not to be found in the way in which it is generally attempted; namely, by first quoting from Scripture general warnings of the peril of unbelief, and then by proving that each of these heresies is unscriptural, or that the contradictory truth is scriptural. For what is to be proved is not that these heresies are unscriptural, but that they are errors of that kind and degree to which Scripture attaches the warning of perdition; or, in other words, what we have to show is not that every statement in the Creed is scriptural, but that every one of them is necessary to salvation. Nothing, therefore, can be more inaccurate or unfair, than to accuse those who doubt

whether every one of the errors condemned in the Creed is necessarily fatal to eternal life, or whether every one of the doctrines stated in it is essential to eternal life, with denying that correct faith is essential to salvation. He who questions, for instance, whether belief in our Lord's descent into hell, or belief that His resurrection took place on the third day after His death and not on the second, is necessary to eternal life, no more denies that these statements are correct, or that correct faith is essential to eternal life, than he who questions whether meat is a necessary of life denies that meat is food or that food is a necessary of life. Or, to use another illustration, he who takes exception to the charge of a judge who has ruled that a certain case of homicide amounts to wilful murder, certainly thereby neither asserts that there is no such offence as wilful murder, nor yet that murder ought not to be capitally punished, nor yet that the homicide in question was not an offence; he only questions whether this particular offence amounted to the crime of wilful murder. And certainly, it were a strange defence of the judge's charge to say that he had done the criminal no injury by his ruling, inasmuch as the jury had acquitted him, and that even had they not done so, it still lay in the power of the sovereign to pardon him. The answer I imagine to such a defence, if we could conceive its being made, would be that whether he had or had not done harm to the criminal, he certainly had done grievous harm to the law by giving an incorrect and therefore an illegal definition of it.

And now to sum up this discussion. If it be true that there are expressions in the Athanasian Creed dealing with the most awful and distressing of subjects,—the conditions of eternal salvation,—which by the confession of their most strenuous defenders are not only very gene-

rally but very perilously misunderstood; and if these same sentences are by those who most insist on their importance most variously and oppositely interpreted; if they are confessedly not the exact words of Scripture, but interpretations and inferences from Scripture; if they can only be brought within the limits of scriptural statement by explanations and qualifications which are not all of them either self-evident or necessarily implied in the wording of those sentences, and which to many seem difficult and subtle, if not actually unsound; if they appear to thousands of Churchmen either not to convey at all, or most imperfectly to convey, the truth they are said to be designed to teach; and if their apparent meaning causes deepest pain and distress to many, not merely of the ignorant, but the most learned, most devout, and most pious members of our Church, is it so very "immoral" a thing to ask that these words be reconsidered by our Church? Is there after all any such utter "profligacy" in asking whether justice, charity, wisdom, and, above all, faithfulness to the cause of dogmatic truth itself may not require that they should be reconsidered?

Surely, there is neither wisdom, nor charity, nor justice in meeting such a plea as this simply with an obstinate *Non possumus*, or worse still, simply with fierce denunciations of all who urge it, as ignorant or dishonest traitors to the Faith? Who, let me ask, best show their love and reverence for the great dogmas of our Faith? Those, who accepting every word of these dogmas implicitly and explicitly, desire to remove what they know to be a most serious practical hindrance to others doing the same? Or those, who refusing so much as to touch, or even to entertain the idea of touching with their little fingers this

heavy burden, insist on presenting these dogmas in their harshest and most questionable aspect, and thereby provoking against them a reaction which may tell, which is telling, most seriously on the Christian Faith? For myself, I am neither ashamed nor afraid to take my place amongst those who plead for the alteration of these clauses; or, if alteration be impossible, for the removal of them from the Creed, of which they are no essential part, and in which their presence as they stand and where they stand, is a real peril to our Church and to Christianity itself. Satisfied I am that such dealing with the Creed, as I believe it to be the truest, is also the safest and most conservative. At least I know of no other way of dealing with it which does not appear to me open to far graver objections than this.

An explanatory rubric seems to me, while it is virtually an alteration of the Creed, to have this fault of its own; that, being an alteration in the form of a gloss, while the text is left unaltered, instead of relieving the difficulty as to the meaning of the text, it only adds to this another difficulty, by requiring all men to accept not merely the dogma in the text, but the dogma of the gloss, whatever that may be; and with it the additional dogma that this gloss is really the true meaning of the text, whether it seem to them to be so or not; a proceeding which, however charitably intended, is really in the last degree arbitrary and tyrannical, and which, as regards a Creed, is an intolerable invasion of Christian liberty. Certainly I have seen no explanatory rubric or synodical declaration, which did not appear to me, so far as I could pretend to understand it, infinitely harder of acceptance than any one of the damnatory clauses.

Hardly less objectionable is the solution of an optional

use, which at present finds much general acceptance. This proposal seems to me vicious in principle, unfair in operation, and ineffectual for the purpose for which it is designed. It is vicious in principle; because it makes the preferences of the congregation or of the minister the measure of the Church's duty. If this Creed be, as it is alleged, not only truth, but truth in its most perfect form, then it is the most vital and important of all truth —truth concerning the essential conditions of eternal life; truth, therefore, which of all others the Church should proclaim on the housetops; and truth, moreover, which they who dislike it most, for that very reason evidently most need to have proclaimed to them. To propose that its use should be optional seems to me as preposterous as to propose that the lighting of a beacon should be optional with the light-keeper, or that the friends of a patient, for whom a physician has prescribed the one and only medicine which can save him, should be told that although the dislike of the medicine was actually an indication of the dangerous nature of the disease it was to cure, yet that they need not administer it if the patient showed a strong dislike to it! If, on the other hand, the Creed is not truth in its best form of expression, why not alter the wording of it so as to remove all reasonable scruples as to its use? In the next place, optional use is unfair in operation, because it devolves on each individual clergyman the invidious and difficult task of deciding what, in that case, the Church would not have had the courage to decide for herself—whether this Creed should or should not be read. How is he to decide this? By the vote of his congregation? And if so, is it to be by that of the majority of the congregation, or of those whom he deems the wisest or the most influential members of it? By the wish of the squire against the people, or of the

people against the squire? And for how long is this doctrinal plebiscite to hold good? For one year, or more, or less? How often is the parish to be agitated by this Athanasian Creed controversy, and divided into Athanasian and anti-Athanasian factions wrangling fiercely about the most sacred mysteries of the Faith? Is it fair or wise to leave the settlement of such questions as these to the courage or the discretion of every individual clergyman amongst 20,000? But if the option lie, not in the congregation, but in the breast of the clergyman only, it will be ineffectual to afford relief to conscience. How, for instance, will it meet the case of a congregation disliking the use of the Creed, and a clergyman insisting on using it; or a clergyman disliking the use, and a congregation claiming it? Will not the option—that is, the personal choice and will of the clergyman—in every case be just the very thing which will make the use or non-use of the Creed most galling and irritating to those who differ from him as to its use or non-use? Will congregations, who now complain that the Creed is imposed upon them by the law of the Church, like it any the better when it is imposed upon them by the mere will or caprice of the clergyman? Will those laymen who demand that its use "exactly as it is and where it is" be carefully preserved to them, be better pleased to have this denied to them, not by the voice of the Church, but by the voice of a single presbyter? I must say that if I were asked to name a device for dealing with the Creed which combined the minimum of relief with the maximum of risk, I should say that it was this of the optional use.

And if I deprecate the adoption of this optional use by the Church, still more earnestly do I deprecate its enactment by the State without the previous assent of the

Church. The Creeds, formularies, and rubrics of our Church as they now stand are the bases of the existing concordat between the Church and the State. Neither party has morally, nor according to the spirit if not the letter of the laws of the Church and State, legally the right to alter these without the consent of the other. To do so seems to me a violation of the original compact, which is dangerous to its existence. The change in this case might be of the very smallest, might even supposably be in itself desirable, and yet might involve a great principle, and that all the more perilously just because the smallness of the change might blind men to the greatness of the principle involved.

What then, you will ask me, is it that I counsel in this present distress, if I thus deprecate the most popular compromise yet proposed, as well as what seems the simplest and most ready way of giving to that compromise legal validity? My advice may seem, I fear, a very tame one, and utterly contemptible to the more valiant and eager spirits of our day. It is simply *patience*. The mind of the Church, deeply agitated as it is by such a question somewhat suddenly pressed upon it, needs time to inform and to express itself more fully, more deliberately, than it has yet been able to do. The first words of such a controversy as this are not generally the wisest, nor the first aspects of it the clearest. May we not hope that further and fuller discussion may lead to a better understanding of one another's real views and purposes; may tend to soften passions and allay fears on either side; may lead, in short, to that calmer and more charitable temper in which alone we can hope to have the blessing of the Spirit of God upon our debates? When, for instance, candid and Christian men on both sides of the dispute come to understand, on the one hand, that

the desire for some change in the Creed does not necessarily imply lack of faith; and, on the other hand, that the desire to retain it unchanged comes from no lack of charity; when they can see that the dogmas of the Faith, and the love without which that Faith is profitless, are equally dear to the combatants on both sides; that the question between them is not one that touches the essence of the Faith, only the manner in which the Church shall commend the Faith to the acceptance of her children—may we not hope that they may find some way of settling this grave question, better, happier, safer than that of either party taking the matter hastily and peremptorily "into their own hands," and forcing their solution of it on their opponents? The best, the most logical solution of this difficulty were dearly bought at such a price as this. If we must come to a struggle, a victory, a schism at the last, so be it, and God show the right! But surely we need not precipitate it; surely, we are bound to do all we can to avert it. Six months is not so very long a period to give for the consideration of the use of a Creed which has been in use in our Church for nearly twice as many centuries; that those who have borne with it all their lives must rush to Parliament next session to demand, at any risk, their immediate deliverance from it. Nor, on the other hand, is this period so ample for deliberation, that at the end of it those who desire to keep the Creed unchanged should have no other answer to the pleadings—the honest, earnest, distressful pleadings—of thousands of their brethren, than this: "We will not hear you plead another word; nothing that you can ever say will in the least change our minds; the Creed shall remain as it is and where it is, now and for ever."

Once more then I venture to counsel a little longer

patience, a little, nay, a great deal more of counsel and conference, before we attempt to come to a final decision on a question so important and so difficult. The outside world will, of course, in that case have its scoff at our indecision and our timidity. Politicians, whose first maxim it is not to legislate on any question of importance for the State before public opinion has ripened on it, may have their sneer at those who wish to legislate on like conditions for the Church. We are not, however, greatly concerned to please such critics. The peace of the Church, nay, the spiritual interest of the very humblest of her members, are of infinitely greater importance to her than a wilderness of newspaper articles.

Nor do I believe that the longer discussion of this question would necessarily be so hurtful to the Church that we must needs hastily shut it up in some one conclusion or other. On the contrary, I believe that it may be God's will that this discussion as to the terms of our Faith and the conditions of our salvation may have the effect of turning the mind of the Church, in these days of lax belief and daring unbelief, to the deeper consideration of those fundamental verities of the Christian Faith which she holds in trust for the world ; may be leading us to weigh, to prove, to grasp once more with a firmer grasp each one of those great dogmas which the Creed defines ; to ascertain more clearly and definitely, if possible, what are the true relations between belief and salvation. As each party in this dispute insists, the one on the infinite importance of the Faith *in* which we believe, and the other on the infinite importance of the Faith *by* which we believe, may we not hope that the weapons, rusted somewhat perhaps from disuse, which are thus being taken down and sharpened afresh for the present conflict, may yet hang side by side in their renewed keenness and

brightness in the armoury of the Church, ready for use against the common enemy?

Let us hope that it may be so. For these are times in which the Church can ill afford to lose one weapon from her armoury, one soldier from her ranks. In all her long struggle with "the evil that is in the world," never did she more need all her united energies than she does at this moment. The kingdom of darkness seems in our day to have had its season of special revival corresponding to that of the kingdom of light. Its forces, as they gather from all sides to the assault upon the city of God, seem animated by a keener spirit, both of hate and of hope. The cold sneering deism of the last century, cold as the orthodoxy that it combated; the more earnest, and at first, more reverent scepticism of the earlier part of this century —which, if anti-Christian in its doubts, was still religious in its aspirations—are fast giving place to an active aggressive hostility to all religion, and especially to Christianity, as the *prava superstitio* which is the chief hindrance to the "progress of humanity" towards the millennium of materialism. And this speculative atheism, this spiritual wickedness, animated as it is by a passionate and fanatical hatred to Christ and to His Faith, is reviving and strengthening its old alliance with the practical godlessness, the mere brute materialism of our fallen nature, which hates religion as it hates law, as it hates society itself, because these are but so many forms of restraint on the appetites and the passions of the animal man. The war cry of the pantheist, the atheist, and the secularist, "Let there be no God," is being answered by the cry of the multitude, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And as these join their forces for the assault on our Zion, what is it that animates them most with hopes of success? It is this, that from our camp they hear, not the answer-

ing war-song of a united host, but the voices of fratricidal strife; the very Temple ringing, as of old, with the battle-cries of the parties that strive for its exclusive possession, forgetful of their common enemy at the gates. No wonder that they promise themselves an easy victory! No wonder that they tell us that no assault of theirs is needed for our overthrow; that they have but to wait, and this discordant and distracted Christianity must perish of its own dissensions! Is it so? Must it be so? Must it be that our unhappy divisions shall at once encourage our enemies, and banish from amongst us our only true defence—the presence of the Prince of Peace? Must it be that for us, too, there shall be heard at last the awful "Let us depart hence!" which shall leave the Temple of our Faith a deserted shrine, no longer defensible, because we shall have made it no longer worth defending? Or shall the presence of a common danger rouse us one and all to the sense of a common duty and a common Faith? Shall the fierce and still fiercer attacks that are being made on Christianity itself draw all Christian men, ere it is too late, nearer to each other?

Shall it be that as thus we draw our ranks closer and closer still around the innermost citadel of our Faith, we shall see more clearly still that which it enshrines—a cross and a grave?—a cross on which hung the Saviour whose last prayer was that His disciples might be one; a grave from which streamed forth on the day of the Resurrection that light of life in which, and by which, we all may be one;—a cross on which we might learn to crucify the carnal affections, the pride, the self-love, the self-will from which spring so many of our contentions; a grave in which we might agree to bury the folded and forgotten swathings of our party divisions;—a cross which if we could but agree to lift it up, but for one hour,

with united hands, might once more draw all men unto Him who died upon it; a grave from which, if we could but bend over it with a united gaze of adoring love, we should draw such "power of His resurrection" as would enable us to raise the world's dead to life.

It may be that this shall be the blessing we shall win from our encounter with the perils of these perilous times. Cheaply purchased it would surely be by greater dangers, by far sorer trials than any that have yet fallen to our lot; nay, by sufferings and persecutions even, such as may be in store for the Church in times less distant than perhaps we like to think. That it may be so, that the ark of the Lord, borne by our weak and often trembling hands into the battle of our day, fall not into the possession of His enemies, let us strive and pray each one of us. For we have each of us his share in determining the result. The faith and the life of the Church is but the sum of the faith and the life that is in each one of her members. The prayers and the labours, the hopes and the fears, the successes and the failures of every one of us are telling every one of them on the issues of this great struggle.

As you separate from this our place of meeting, to return to the posts assigned you by the Captain of our Salvation, you go to enter once more into a combat to which your whole lives have been by your own free choice devoted, and which demands from you all of courage and wisdom, all of self-denial and energy you possess. As you go forth again to war with ignorance, crime, vice, sorrow, suffering—sin in all its varied forms, what word can I, who have been called under God to lead, to counsel, to exhort you in this fight—what word of warning more solemn, of encouragement more cheering, can I speak to you or to myself, than this, "We are *cross-*

bearers!" The Standard that we bear aloft into the strife still bears its old inscription, *In hoc signo vinces.* But the Cross which we thus uplift, we must first have borne for ourselves. The Christ we preach we must first have known as our own Saviour. If we thus preach and thus live, then where we found our first strength, there shall we find its constant renewal. For the daily toil of our daily task, with all its disheartening weariness, its trying disappointments, its depressing sense of comparative failure; for the greater conflicts, too, and trials of our ministry, with their sudden pressure of unforeseen difficulties, their sharper anxieties, their keener hopes and fears; for all these there is one, and but one, never-failing source of comfort and of help, one place alone where we may renew our strength—it is at the foot of the cross. There, as we kneel and pray—there, as we kneel and hope—there, as we kneel and vow—as we offer ourselves once more, in the love of our hearts, in the labour of our lives, as willing sacrifices unto God—will there come into our hearts the peace, born not of ease and comfort but of a death agony of fear and yet of faith, the peace which came of the vision, seen from afar, of the accomplished travail of the soul of Him who died to win it for us. And with that peace will come the strength it gives, the strength of a heart at one with God, strong in its resolve to do or to suffer His holy will, asking of Him but one thing, to be better taught what that will may be.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—Were we to enter into a discussion of the theory of Catholic consent as the infallible source of Dogma and Ritual, we should have to discuss the following questions:—

1. Whether it can be proved that our Lord's promise to His Church necessarily implies infallibility, and not rather indestructibility, immunity, that is, from perpetual error and not perpetual immunity from error?

2. Whether, granting that our Lord's words are a promise of infallibility, they guarantee this infallibity to General Councils, that is to say, whether the promise that the Church Universal shall never err necessarily means that a majority of a minority of her Bishops assembled under certain conditions shall never err?

3. And if so, whether there is any infallible definition of these conditions of infallibility; any infallible criteria, that is to say, by which a true General Council may be distinguished from a council falsely claiming that title?

4. If the decrees of General Councils depend for their validity upon Catholic consent, what is it that constitutes true Catholicity of consent: whether is it that of the majority of Christians, or the absolute and literal totality of Christians all over the world?

5. Whether, on either of these suppositions, such Catholic consent has ever been ascertained, or ever could be ascertained, for any doctrine whatever?

6. Whether, therefore, the famous Vincentian rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, ever proved, or could prove, anything except perhaps the existence of a God, and whether the attempt to define the "omnes," whose assent is to be the test of truth, does not involve us in this difficulty, that if these "all" are all those who "profess and call themselves Christians," the definition would include heretics, and if the "all" are those only who are true Catholics, then we have got into the vicious circle of first defining the Catholic Faith to be that which is assented to by all true Catholics, and then defining all true Catholics to be those who assent to the true Catholic Faith?

7. And, lastly, we might ask whether, even granting the Vincentian rule to be applicable to questions of Faith, any Church in Christendom ever held it applicable to questions of ritual, and to be applied to these according to the private judgment of every individual priest or deacon in any Church National?

Note B.—Those who claim this extraordinary right for each individual priest in our Church are especially fond of appealing to the Thirtieth Canon of our Church, in which they maintain that this right is expressly conceded. The passage in the Canon thus appealed to is as follows:—"Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that, as the Apology of the Church of England confesseth, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men, and only depart from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolical Churches which were their first founders."

The meaning of these words seems to me perfectly clear. Our Church, in defending herself for enjoining a ceremony which is also enjoined by the Church of Rome, defines the principle on which her Prayer Book is framed, namely, that it is that of not departing from other Churches "in all things," but only in those points wherein they are fallen from themselves in their ancient integrity and from the Apostolic Churches, and of retaining all ceremonies that are not either endamaging to the Church or offensive to sober men. The natural inference from these words is that every ceremony not retained by our Church is in her judgment either of dangerous tendency or offensive to sober men.

Note C.—The presumption of demanding the same assent, and with the same penalties for refusing it, for our deductions from an Article of the Faith, as for the Faith itself, is denounced by Jeremy Taylor in words that seem almost prophetic of our present Athanasian controversy. "Whatsoever is added to it" (the Faith) "is either contained in the Article virtually, or it is not. If not, then it is no part of the Faith, and by the laws of Faith there is no obligation passed on any man to believe it; but if it be, then he that believes the Article does virtually believe all that is virtually contained in it: but no man is to be pressed with the consequence drawn from thence: unless the transcript be drawn by the same hand that wrote the original. For we are sure that it came in the simplicity of it from an infallible Spirit; but he that bids me believe his deductions under pain of damnation, bids me under pain of damnation believe that he is an unerring logician; for which, because God has given me no command, and himself can give me no security, if I can defend myself from that man's pride, God will defend me from damnation."*

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor, vol. x., pp. 469-70. Ed. Heber, 1828.

THE END.

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